The Wild Words of Louis Armstrong ALBERT MURRAY

THE NEW REPUBLIC

W.'s Clinton Problem
DANA MILBANK

Ken Burns's Nostalgia
CHRISTINE STANSELL

November 22, 1999

"Third parties are like bees: once they have stung, they die."
—RICHARD HOFSTADTER

The End of the Reform Party

By Sean Wilentz

TRB:
ANDREW SULLIVAN

$3.50US $3.50CAN
47>
01742
0 787446 8

#BXBKDML***5-DIGIT 94301
#TNR00000681715#60 29OCT01
009
RON K UNZ
555 BRYANT ST #371
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BEAUTIFUL
PEOPLE
Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Vicomtesse Othenin d'Haussonville (detail), 1845. The Frick Collection, New York.

PORTRAITS BY INGRES

IMAGE OF AN EPOCH

Now through January 2, 2000

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Fifth Avenue at 82nd Street • Open Friday and Saturday evenings until 9 p.m. • www.metmuseum.org

Tickets not required for special exhibitions.

Made possible by The Florence Gould Foundation.

Organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., and The National Gallery, London.

Indemnity granted by the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities.

Hear the exhibition on KEY TO THE MET AUDIO GUIDE sponsored by Bloomberg NEWS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
NOVEMBER 22, 1999
ISSUE 4,427

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AND CHAIRMAN
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR
PETER BEINART
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Executive Editor
NURITH C. AIZENMAN
Senior Editors
JONATHAN COHN, MICHELLE COTTLE, GREGG EASTERBROOK, DAVID GRANN, JACOB HEILBRUNN, JOHN B. JUDIS, DANA MILBANK, ANDREW SULLIVAN, JAMES WOOD
Legal Affairs
JEFFREY ROSEN
Editor-at-Large
CHARLES LANE
Managing Editor
JASON ZENGERLE
Assistant Managing Editor
RUTH HALIKMAN
Films: STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater: ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Poetry: CHARLES WRIGHT
Art: JED PERL
Architecture: MARTIN FILLER
Dance: MINDY ALOFF
Contributing Writers
MATTHEW MILLER, LEE SIEGEL
New Republic Online
JEREMY MCCARTER
New Republic Books (BASIC BOOKS)
TIM BARTLETT
Contributing Editors
FOUAD AJAMI, AKHIL REED AMAR, ELIOT A. COHEN, JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN, NATHAN GLAZER, ANTHONY GRAFTON, ANN HULBERT, TONY JUDT, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, GLENN C. LOURY, SHERWIN B. NULAND, DAVID RIEFF, MICHAEL J. SANDEL, MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL, CASS R. SUNSTEIN, MARGARET TALBOT, E.V. THAW, MICHAEL WALZER, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, C. VANN WOODWARD, ROBERT WRIGHT
Contributing Artists
JACK COUGHLIN, VINT LAWRENCE, DAVID SCHORR
Special Correspondent
ANNA HUSARSKA
Associate Editor
JONATHAN CHAIT (ON LEAVE)
Consulting Art Director
JONATHAN HOUSTON
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Production Director
BRUCE STEINKE
Production Manager
HENRY RIGGS
Assistant Editors
CARRIE CUNNINGHAM, KATIE ISENBERG, RYAN LIZZA
Assistant to the Editor
SARAH WILDMAN
Assistant Literary Editor
BRIAN PHILLIPS
Assistant Poetry Editor
MELANIE REHAK
Reporter-Researchers
NEGAR AKHAVI, JAKE HALPERN, BENJAMIN SOSKIS

PUBLISHER
WILL LIPPINCOTT
Director of Advertising, West
JOAN STAPLETON TOOLEY
Director of Finance and Operations
CHRISTINA R. BONIFER
Director of Advertising, Washington
NICHOLAS COSTON
Director of Advertising, New York
ELLEN JARVIS
Marketing Manager
SHABNAM K. SHARMA
Circulation Manager
HOPE ROBERTS
Accounting Manager
KIMBERLY HUSTAD
Advertising Associate
SHANNEL MYERS
Advertising Coordinator
ANN ROSSAKI
Accounting Assistant
BONNIE SCHWARTZ-WOLTMAN
Circulation Assistant
KELLY SPRING
Back Issues and Reception
STEVEN DAVIS
Business Intern
CELINA CHAVEZ

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Bill comes due, America stretches out, &c.

6 **ANDREW SULLIVAN** TRB: AFTERLIFE The construction of a gay rights icon.

9 **THE EDITORS** APOLOGIZE The Sudan bombing looks worse by the day. Let's admit it.

10 **NOTEBOOK** Bob Smith returns to the fold, Kofi Annan folds, &c.

12 **AMY KELLER** ON THE HILL: MR. POPULARITY Campaign finance reform is going nowhere, and its leading Democratic proponent, Russ Feingold, is a pariah in his own caucus. Coincidence?

13 **LEE SIEGEL** NEW YORK DISPATCH: BIDDING GOODBYE The unbearable lightness of the Marilyn Monroe auction.

14 **DANA MILBANK** CAMPAIGN JOURNAL: STAGE PRESENCE John McCain is looking more and more presidential. Maybe it has something to do with his opponents.

16 **JONATHAN CHAIT** SECURITY GUARD The Republicans have a principled argument for keeping Social Security off-budget. They just don't know it.

18 **JAMES HARDING** KAIFENG DISPATCH: EAST OF EDEN A nation of one billion gets religion.

23 **SEAN WILENTZ** THIRD OUT Pundits think the Reform Party is about to remake American politics. In fact, it already has. And that's why it's doomed.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: ON THE TOWN Martin Scorsese's *Bringing Out the Dead* is flashy and empty.

27 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ON THEATER: CULTURE CLASHES Breakdown and disaffection in the new London theater.

28 **MARY JO BANG** POEM *Time Speeds, Said Louise, When a Fever Rises*

29 **ALBERT MURRAY** JAZZ LIPS *Louis Armstrong, in His Own Words: Selected Writings* by Louis Armstrong, edited with an introduction by Thomas Brothers

36 **CHRISTINE STANSELL** E PLURIBUS SEPIA Ken Burns's sweet traduction of American history.

40 **LEE SIEGEL** FEAR OF NOT FLYING The literate magic of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter stories.

46 **JONATHAN CHAIT** WASHINGTON DIARIST: RELATIVITY THEORY

On the Cover : Illustration by BILL RUSSELL
On the Web : www.thenewrepublic.com

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 221, Number 21, Issue 4,427, November 22, 1999. (Printed in the U.S. on November 3, 1999.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, April 26 & May 3, July 19 & 26, and Sept. 13 & 20, 1999) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. For advertising inquiries, please contact Ann Rossaki at (202) 331-7494 or Shannel Myers in our NY sales office at (212) 924-8700. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $4.00 (includes postage & handling). **© 1999 by The New Republic, Inc.****(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 331-0275. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (Internet mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Amendment

TO THE EDITORS:

Jed Perl's report on the Brooklyn Museum of Art ("Shocked," October 18) was excellent and thought-provoking. However, the article seemed to beg two questions.

First, Chris Ofili, Marcus Harvey, and Arnold Lehman are free to create works of art that represent child murderers or arguably blaspheme the Catholic church. They can do this in public or in private, in museums, on street corners, or in the privacy of their living rooms, and no one will stop them. The only question is whether they will be able to pay their bills with taxpayers' money while doing so. How, exactly, is this a First Amendment issue?

Second, taxation constitutes taking money from citizens via the implied threat of force. This seems a perfectly acceptable part of the social contract so long as the money is then used for (relatively if not absolutely) uncontroversial purposes: national defense, education, public health, and so on. Of course, it is not always easy to draw the line between a controversial purpose and an uncontroversial one. But why is it difficult to conclude that the support of art to which a great many people do or would object is not a legitimate use of their own money?

THE NEW REPUBLIC has argued that one advantage of welfare reform is that it removes an easy target from the list of angry-white-male objections to government spending. A decision to decline public funding for exhibits such as "Sensation" seems likely to be similarly beneficial.

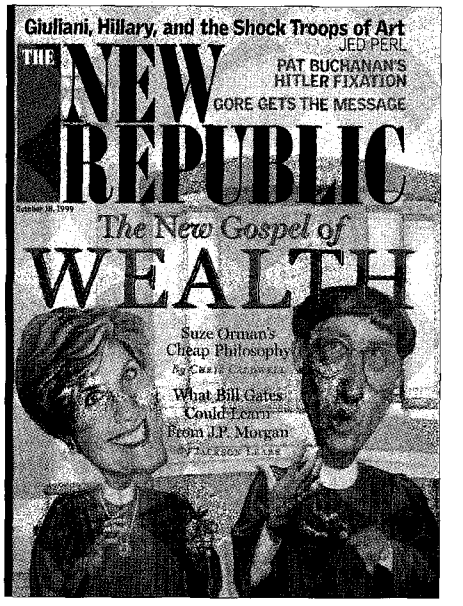
RUSSELL PITTMAN
Takoma Park, Maryland

Howl

TO THE EDITORS:

In his October 18 column, "Story Time," Dana Milbank writes that, "in a recent dispatch" on my website, *The Daily Howler* (*www.dailyhowler.com*), I described his campaign coverage as "stomach-turning" and accused him of a number of offenses, including, "worst of all, being too hard on [Al] Gore." Milbank implies that I took this tack because I was a college roommate of Gore's.

In fact, the article I described as "stomach-turning" was a column Milbank wrote about George W. Bush ("Touchy," September 27). It was Milbank's tasteless portrayal of Bush that I principally critiqued in my piece. I did mention, in


Giuliani, Hillary, and the Shock Troops of Art
JED PERL
THE NEW REPUBLIC
PAT BUCHANAN'S HITLER FIXATION
GORE GETS THE MESSAGE
The New Gospel of WEALTH
Suze Orman's Cheap Philosophy
What Bill Gates Could Learn From J.P. Morgan

passing, similar articles he had written about Lamar Alexander (twice), Elizabeth Dole, and—oh, yes—Gore. The article about Gore (with the overline "Inside Gore's Pants") had appeared in the July 12 issue of TNR. It was not mentioned on my website until the Bush piece appeared ten weeks later.

Milbank implies that *The Daily Howler* critiques nothing at all except coverage of Gore. Ironically, it is precisely this sort of baldly inaccurate writing that the website exists to explore.

BOB SOMERBY
Baltimore, Maryland

DANA MILBANK REPLIES:

Now why would anybody think Bob Somerby is biased because he was Gore's Harvard roommate? Perhaps because the last *twelve* stories on his website about candidates complain that the press is too mean to his pal Al. A few of the latest installments: "It's time to ask an awkward question. Is the press corps sand-bagging Gore?"; "The writers insist young Gore was stiff. Their reporting seems to say something different"; and "Gore said Bradley would spend too much on health. On three follow-up shows, nobody noticed."

Bill comes due

TO THE EDITORS:

Martin Peretz's Washington Diarist ("Dollar Bill," October 11) is a little too much for even a supporter of Vice President Al Gore to take. According to Peretz, Bill Bradley has no legitimacy as a presidential candidate, because:

1) He decided to leave the cushy life of a consultant to enter the fray of what is beginning to look like an issues- and ideas-centered Democratic primary season.

It may be small. But the Bose® Acoustic Wave® music system is definitely an overachiever. The system, which is available in platinum white or graphite gray, features a compact disc player, an AM/FM tuner, a handy remote control, and our patented Acoustic Waveguide™ speaker technology. And it produces a rich, natural sound quality comparable to audio systems costing thousands of dollars. We know that's hard to believe. So we're ready to prove it. Call or write now for your free information kit. Because, like the award-winning system itself, it's available directly from Bose, the most respected name in sound.

Call today, 1-800-280-2673, ext. G4776.
For information on all our products: www.bose.com/g4776

For FREE shipping, order within 30 days.

Mr./Mrs./Ms. Name (Please Print) ( ) Daytime Telephone
Address ( ) Evening Telephone
City State Zip
Or mail to: Bose Corporation, Dept. DMG-G4776, The Mountain, Framingham, MA 01701-9168.

BOSE® Better sound through research®

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

2) He has only three supporters among the many current and former Democratic senators, one of whom (Senator Pat Moynihan) feels compelled to support him largely because Hillary Clinton's army has sullied his farm.

3) He is getting a larger percentage of his contributions from "big money," which comes from people and organizations that have previously benefited from Bradley's support of their issues. (I appreciate Peretz's desire not to make too much of the current contribution numbers, but he appears to do just that; after all, Bradley hasn't yet had time to develop his network to reach out effectively to smaller donors, and Gore is killing him in terms of total number of donors.)

4) He has support from Republicans!

5) He is duller than Gore.

Why not instead celebrate the fact that democracy still works? While Bradley's push to the left may appear suicidal now, it may in fact energize previously nonvoting citizens who relish the opportunity to re-examine the effects of NAFTA, our increasingly unfair health care system, the lack of a cogent foreign policy, and other deficiencies of the Clinton-Gore years. Let the debate begin, and may the best candidate win. And let's be glad that we aren't Republicans, who appear unlikely to have meaningful debate on any substantive issues, if the current pabulum is any indication.

STEVE EVANS
Buffalo, New York

TO THE EDITORS:
The next time Martin Peretz wants to attack a candidate who has the temerity to run against Al Gore, he would be well-advised to mention that he was formerly Gore's teacher. While this detail may be common knowledge to Beltway insiders and to longtime readers of TNR, fairness demands that Peretz make mention of this fact (as he did the first time he endorsed Gore for the presidency, back in 1988).

EDWARD S. REISMAN
Berwyn, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITORS:
It was dismaying to read Martin Peretz's column in the October 11 issue. Apparently his support for Al Gore is so blind that he finds it necessary to make ad hominem attacks on Bill Bradley. Much of his account was just a nasty smear. He is so enamored of Gore that he can see no faults in him and no good qualities in Bradley. Has he forgotten the Buddhist temple fund-raising debacle, among other things?

In any case, Mr. Peretz, support whom you wish, but try to inject some fairness and moderation into that support for Gore.

FLORENCE C. GETTIS
Via the Internet

TO THE EDITORS:
I am in total agreement with Martin Peretz's column about Bill Bradley—although it is likely to be dismissed by the media elite because of Peretz's well-known longtime friendship with Al Gore. The media is treating Bradley as if he were a new star on the political horizon instead of a former senator who was almost defeated by the then totally unknown Christine Todd Whitman. I believe that this disproportionate amount of publicity (especially considering that Bradley has yet to win a primary) is due to the media's dislike of President Clinton, which they are taking out on Gore.

The Republicans would love to have Bradley as the Democratic candidate, because Bradley has nothing to run on. Unlike Gore, he cannot claim credit for the best economy in 30 years, and he has nothing to show for his 18 years in the Senate except for the 1986 Tax Reform Act, which eliminated many middle-class deductions. Furthermore, because of his votes against the Gulf war and welfare reform and his recent suggestion to change the 1964 civil rights laws to include gays, the Republicans will be able to define him as an out-of-the-mainstream liberal.

Bradley cannot win. That is why he should not get the Democratic nomination.

REBA SHIMANSKY
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITORS:
I suggest there is one oversight in Martin Peretz's assessment of former Senator Bill Bradley. Peretz writes that Bradley "is identified with no particular theme and no particular issue." There is one issue that Bradley promoted: he was one of the first to advance a "flatter" tax, and he is identified with the Tax Reform Act of the mid-'80s that drastically lowered the highest income-tax rates for the wealthy. A few weeks ago, a national report on the greater gap in wealth between the many poor and the few rich concluded that the increased disparity in wealth between the two groups was due, to a certain degree, to that tax reform, which permitted the richest people to pay lower taxes and keep more of their wealth. Was that a "liberal" policy? Sure—liberal to the wealthy.

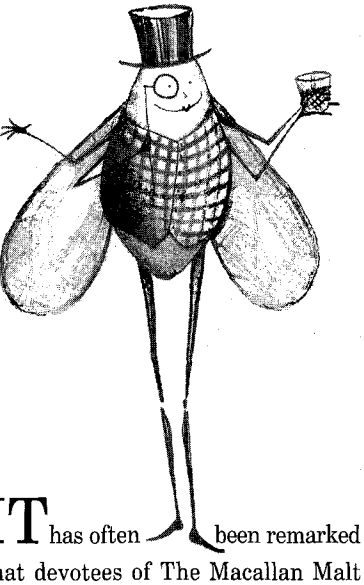
VIVIAN R. GRUDER
New York, New York

Western values

TO THE EDITORS:
What can one say about an unsigned article (Notebook, September 13 & 20) whose author reviews a book (*The Cornel West Reader*) in which his own work is characterized as "third-rate hatchet jobs

continued on page 44

HAMISH
NOT
SQUEAMISH



IT has often been remarked that devotees of The Macallan Malt Whisky nurture an almost mystical belief in the 'water of life' qualities of their favourite dram. But seldom has it found such expression as in the following true anecdote kindly related to us by Mr C. Wemyss of Ravenhead, Notts.

'My friend Hamish, at a pre-Christmas party in my garden, found a fly had landed in his glass, and drowned. "Don't worry, Hamish," said I. "Have another Macallan in a clean glass." "I shall do nothing of the sort," he replied, removing the tiny creature from his glass and sipping the sherry-gold elixir.

"The Macallan never hurt a fly, and nor does a fly hurt The Macallan!" Ten minutes later indeed the insect stirred and flew off.

"There you are," said Hamish triumphantly. "And now you can give me a *gnat's more*." '

THE MACALLAN.
THE MALT.

THE MACALLAN® Scotch Whisky. 43% alc./vol.
Sole U.S. importer Rémy Amérique, Inc., New York, N.Y.
© 1999 The Macallan Distillers Ltd.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Afterlife

WHY DOES Matthew Shepard still figure so prominently in the national psyche? More than a year after his murder, the interest has not subsided. The trials of his killers have received hefty media attention; his name is ritually invoked in the debate over hate-crime laws; long articles have appeared in publications as diverse as *Harper's* and *Vanity Fair*. He's made the cover of *Time*. Gay rights groups have been particularly intent on making Shepard a symbol of homosexuality in our time, sending out countless direct-mail pitches featuring him (my mailbox is full of them) and using his story in multiple press releases and TV ads. Last month, the largest gay rights group, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), raised more than half a million dollars at a gala black-tie dinner in his honor. His parents made distraught appeals for HRC's legislative agenda from the podium.

If the Shepard case proved the need for hate-crime laws, this emphasis might make sense. But the case is a somewhat spectacular example of their superfluity. Shepard's murderers were swiftly caught and brought to justice without any such laws. The first is behind bars for life. The second, denied a "gay panic" defense, may get the death penalty. Even advocates of hate-crime legislation concede this point. They know that such laws would primarily affect much less grave misdemeanors.

Similarly, if Shepard's fate proved the ubiquity of anti-gay murders, then his elevation to totemic status might also make sense. But, again, the evidence shows that Shepard is representative of very few gay Americans. According to the FBI, in 1997, the year before Shepard was killed, a total of three hate-crime murders of homosexuals were recorded in the entire United States. This number is not a fiction. Murders are the least underreported of crimes, because bodies have to be accounted for, and the FBI's number is the total reported by some 10,000 reporting agencies across the country. But let's assume that the FBI understates gay hate-crime murders by a factor of five. That makes 15 anti-gay murders a year. Further assume that around five percent of the population is gay. That means that the chance of a gay American meeting the same fate as Matthew Shepard is about one in a million. Or about the same as being hit by a railroad train.

No, the resilience of the Shepard case is about political and cultural symbolism. It is about the need for a victim so blameless and a crime so heinous that a story about the relationship between gay Americans and straight Americans can be told in which there are no complexities and no doubts. So Shepard becomes a martyr, even though, unlike martyrs, he did not choose to die. Shepard is "crucified," even though, in reality, he was tied to a post, his body and head slumped on the ground. After a while, as in the case of the religious right's Columbine "martyr," Cassie Bernall, the facts cease to matter. What matters is the message. And the message is that homosexuals are innocent victims and heterosexuals are either saviors or menaces. You are either enlightened or a bigot—on the side of the victims or on the side of the murderers.

The political use of Shepard began early. Just after his death, there were appropriate outpourings of grief and shock. But then the organized memorials became political rallies in which any opposition to various legislative initiatives was deemed equivalent to complicity in Shepard's murder. The result was a kind of political blackmail—and it continues to this day. Any qualms, for example, about hate-crime laws, and you are deemed a heartless hater. When the Hate Crimes Prevention Act failed in a House-Senate conference last month, HRC's executive director, Elizabeth Birch, declared that the decision "showed a callous disregard for hate-crime victims and their families." As simple as that. Are you a bad person or a good one?

The marketing of Shepard is also a damaging symbolic statement about who gay men still are in this culture. Other recently murdered homosexuals have not achieved anywhere near the same level of attention. Billy Jack Gaither was killed shortly after Shepard, in Alabama, by two men who bludgeoned him to death and then burned his body on a stack of rubber tires. Unlike Shepard, Gaither had reason to trust his attackers—one of them was a drinking buddy. But, unlike Shepard, Gaither is barely remembered. Or take Private Barry Winchell, a gay soldier stationed in Kentucky, murdered at the same age as Shepard. In a barracks fight, Winchell had bested a soldier who gay-baited him. In retaliation, the straight soldier and a gang of other soldiers allegedly dragged Winchell from his bed and beat him to death with a baseball bat. This crime was committed by U.S. soldiers against someone serving his country and supposedly under the protection of the government. The military is still investigating, but a court-martial of the suspected murderer has been scheduled. Barely heard of the incident? It occurred four months ago, but it has none of Shepard's staying power.

The reason, I suspect, is that Shepard's image serves certain political purposes. Winchell and Gaither were clearly men, not boys. One was a soldier; the other was a middle-aged, burly, working-class figure with only average looks. They weren't upper-middle-class; they weren't well-educated; they weren't waifs. They provoke far more mixed reactions. They threaten the weak, effeminate stereotypes of gay men that the victimologists require and that many heterosexuals are more comfortable with. They were more prudent than Shepard was. Confronted with violence, they were more likely to fight, as Winchell did, than to retreat. They suggest a gay world that is strong and grown-up and mainstream—exactly the kind of world that has no need for pity. They suggest the kind of homosexual world that needs protection from crime—as we all do—but has no need for special sympathy or treatment; a world in which a man might want to serve his country or marry another man, but in which the desire for special state protection is less pressing than the desire to be left alone.

Such a world does not exist in the iconography of Shepard or the politics he has inspired. The way he is discussed suggests a child rather than an adult. The name of his memorial website, *www.matthewsplace.com*, summons up the idea of a child's safe space. The website depicts him crouched sparrow-like on a waterfall, gazing cherubically into the distance while music plays. The point of this iconography is to divest Shepard of any maturity, any manhood, any adult sexuality—for that matter, any true humanity. It is literally to infantilize him, to turn him into a symbol that is at once pitiful and utterly unthreatening to the stereotypes that still burden most homosexual men, stereotypes that continue to weaken our self-confidence and self-respect.

There was a time when African American men were also routinely referred to as "boys," but I don't think civil rights groups ever emphasized this image in order to gain equality. They realized instead that it was only when black Americans stopped being viewed as children that equality was conceivable. The marketing of Matthew Shepard in death is nowhere near as horrifying as what was done to him in life. But that doesn't make it any more palatable. Or any less detrimental to the cause of homosexual equality as a whole.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Announcing an ambitious new plan to deal with America's growing need for more energy. *And* less pollution.

In the next 21 years, the demand for energy in America is projected to increase by 26.17%. Given the present state of technology, resulting carbon emissions are projected to increase by 33.69%.*

This increase in energy demand is an unavoidable necessity. The increase in environmental pollution shouldn't have to be.

People in science, government and industry are presently working to meet the energy demands of the future. Others are working to find ways to protect the environment in the face of these increased demands. Unfortunately, the various organizations and groups involved are often unaware of what each is doing.

That's why the Outlook Policy Forum was formed. We believe that, by bringing together representatives from government and environmental organizations, universities and research centers, industry and agricultural interests, the energy needs of the future will be met in ways that will be far more benign to the environment.

We hope to serve as a catalyst and facilitator for the development of a long-term national energy strategy for the United States.

It's to that end that we'll be working. How successful will we be?

We'll let you know on these very same pages in the coming months.

Outlook Policy Forum

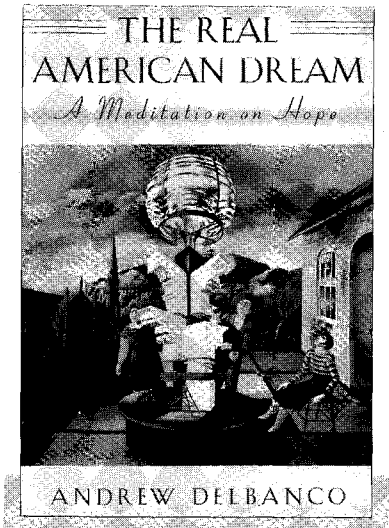
First Answers. *Then* Action.

1199 North Fairfax Street, Suite 450 Alexandria, Virginia 22314 703-548-8166 www.outlookpolicyforum.org

**Annual Energy Outlook 1998* produced by Energy Information Administration

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW FROM HARVARD



THE REAL AMERICAN DREAM

A Meditation on Hope

ANDREW DELBANCO

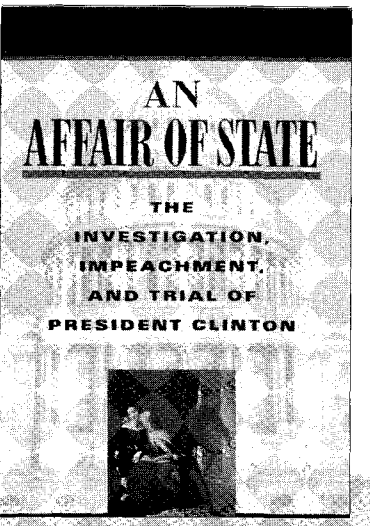
"Self, Delbanco points out, will surely prove an empty, unsatisfying, and ultimately self-defeating object of worship. Unless we recover some sense of a common good, he suspects, we may be headed for moral collapse—or worse yet, the rise of some nefarious ideology or movement. Delbanco does not believe that the apocalyptic 'rough beast' of despotism is right around the corner—or inevitable. But he offers his jeremiad as a timely warning and a reminder of things that matter."

—Merle Rubin,
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

"This represents as fine a synthesis as can be found on hope and the longing for something more in the collective American soul."

—Sandra Collins, LIBRARY JOURNAL

William E. Massey Sr. Lectures in the History of American Civilization • $19.95 cloth



AN AFFAIR OF STATE

The Investigation, Impeachment, and Trial of President Clinton

RICHARD A. POSNER

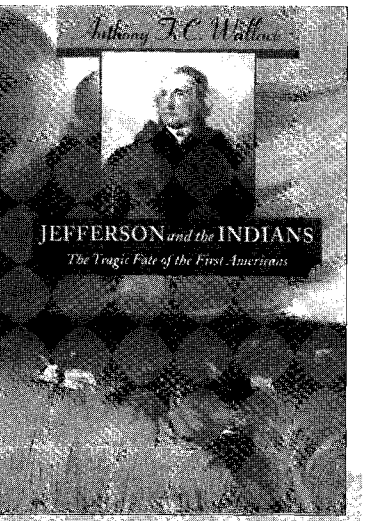
"Posner shows that, despite its lurid and shameful origins, the [Clinton-Lewinsky] episode raised questions of law and morality that are profoundly important to the direction of the country and to our sense of the American political order. His analysis transforms the impeachment into an event of abiding significance. Mr. Posner works with unusual care through each of the moral and legal questions of the impeachment process."

—George L. Priest,
WALL STREET JOURNAL

"It is not just a lucid, dignified analysis of this tangled mess from one of the country's leading legal scholars. It is a testament to the capacity of the human mind to soar above even the most emotionally charged and sordid events and discover something of beauty and clarity."

—James B. Stewart,
NEW YORK OBSERVER

$24.95 cloth



JEFFERSON AND THE INDIANS

The Tragic Fate of the First Americans

ANTHONY F. C. WALLACE

"Bancroft Prize-winning historian Wallace gives us a book that immediately becomes the best among very few other studies of its subject…[The book] makes clear the complexities of native-European interaction in the post-Revolutionary era…[and is] a searching scholarly study of one of the great American dilemmas."

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

"A probing intellectual history of Jefferson himself. Jefferson's attitude toward Native Americans reflects his overall complexity as a thinker… This fascinating account of an unexplored topic is highly recommended."

—Daniel D. Liestman,
LIBRARY JOURNAL

Belknap Press • $29.95 cloth

HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

800 448 2242 • WWW.HUP.HARVARD.EDU

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Apologize

ON AUGUST 7 of last year, terrorists connected to Osama Bin Ladin blew up the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Two weeks later, in the early evening of August 20, America retaliated.

Tomahawk cruise missiles fired from U.S. warships stationed in the Red Sea destroyed the Al-Shifa pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, Sudan. Now, more than 14 months later, after repeated investigative reports and repeated evasions by the Clinton administration, it is clear that the missile attack was a mistake. It's time to say so.

In the attack's immediate aftermath, the administration made many claims on its behalf. Few have withstood scrutiny. Contrary to government assertions, the plant was indeed manufacturing medicines (about half of Sudan's pharmaceutical needs). There was no heavy security at the facility, and it was not patrolled by the Sudanese military, as was alleged. It was not owned or controlled by the Sudanese government, but by a Saudi banker with *anti*-fundamentalist ties. The chemical EMPTA, which can be used to manufacture VX nerve gas and which was apparently found in a soil sample 60 feet from Al-Shifa's property, does indeed have limited commercial applications. Subsequent testing at the site has found no materials associated with chemical weapons. And no evidence directly linking the factory to Osama Bin Ladin has ever surfaced. Despite all this, it is still possible that Al-Shifa was in some way involved with the production or storage of chemical weapons. But the weight of the evidence suggests it was nothing more than a privately owned pharmaceutical plant. And, if the Clinton administration has information to the contrary, it has not produced it.

For isolationists on both the right and the left, the Al-Shifa blunder is a godsend. It seems to confirm what they wish so much to believe—that this administration will find any pretext to punish the few nations not fully under its thumb. In fact, the evidence suggests the opposite. Al-Shifa was more the result of this administration's discomfort with the use of force than of its overeagerness. And it proves once again a lesson that the Clinton administration has resolutely refused to learn: U.S. military campaigns that aim for symbolism and inoffensiveness end up failing not only strategically but also morally.

The targeting process leading to the Al-Shifa attack (and to a simultaneous attack against Afghanistan) seems to have had three goals: first, to attack both Bin Ladin's Afghanistan base and a part of his network outside that country; second, to restrict the decision-making process to a small group of senior advisers; third, and above all, to minimize casualties. James Risen's recent reporting in *The New York Times* suggests that the administration was intent on a simultaneous attack because it both paralleled the double embassy bombings and emphasized America's ability to strike far-flung corners of the globe without risking harm to U.S. personnel. Hence the mission's code name: Operation Infinite Reach. The Sudanese target was, then, largely symbolic. And, as such, officials seem to have insisted on a location that would result in the fewest civilian casualties rather than one where there was clear evidence of chemical-weapons proliferation.

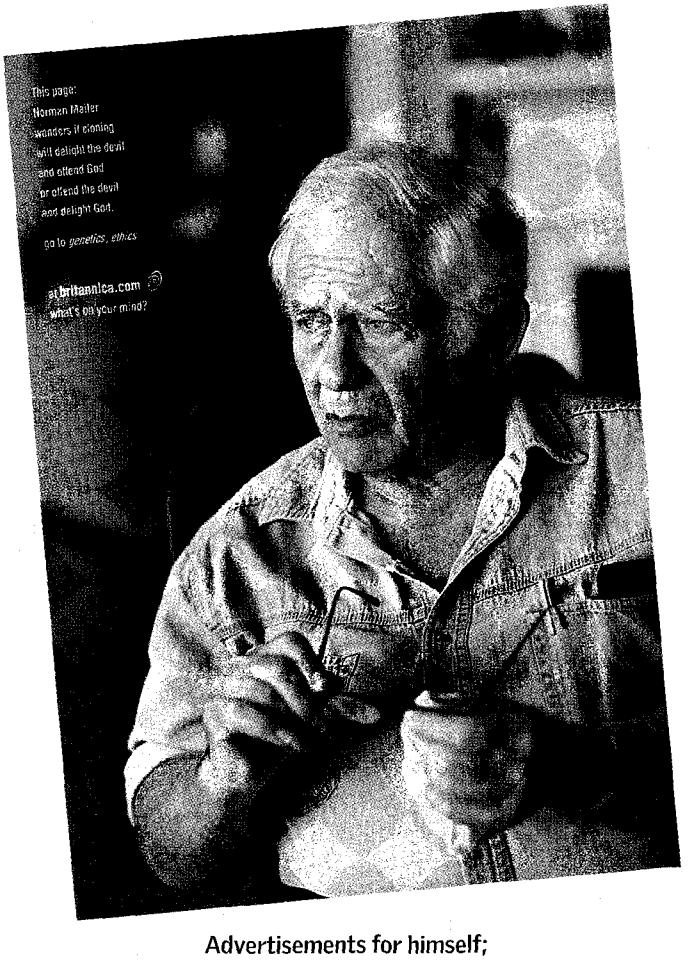
The Clinton administration has done this before. In 1993, William Safire noted that, when faced with a similar choice about how to punish Iraq for its plot to assassinate former President George Bush, "Mr. Clinton chose from among the weakest military options." And then, of course, there was Kosovo, where the administration waged a war against genocide premised on the notion that America must not lose a single soldier. In Kosovo, "interventionism lite" meant an air war when ground troops might have prevented ethnic cleansing. In Sudan, it meant a symbolic response when a real one was warranted. In Kosovo, it meant accidentally striking civilian convoys that pilots couldn't see from a mile above ground. In Sudan, it meant destroying a medicine factory. In both cases, odious regimes were handed propaganda victories, and the isolationists had a field day.

"I was here on this island up till two-thirty in the morning," Clinton told a church group on Martha's Vineyard shortly after the strikes, "trying to make absolutely sure that at that chemical plant there was no night shift." An admirable sentiment, but a misguided one. Loss of life is always regrettable, but, if it results from a serious blow against a terrorist operation that threatens American lives, it is justified. If, however, the attempt to kill fewer civilians leads to a strategically meaningless attack on a questionable target, then the innocent truly have died in vain. That is the prospect that should have kept Clinton up at night. And, tragically, it seems to have come to pass—not because this administration was too bold, but because it was too timid. It's time to come clean. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

OUR MAN IN HAVANA: Relations between Illinois and Cuba, we are relieved to report, have never been better. Illinois Governor George Ryan and a delegation of business leaders and bureaucrats recently completed a five-day junket to Havana. At first, Ryan described it as a business trip, saying he wanted Illinois to be prepared to conduct business with Cuba when Fidel Castro no longer rules. Later, he called it a humanitarian mission. In any case, the Clinton administration was not pleased. "We'd prefer that there not be a lot of high-level contact with Castro," said State Department spokesman James Rubin, and, after Ryan's performance, it's easy to see why. After a meeting with Cuban dissidents, Ryan told reporters that Communist rule had ruined Cuba: "Basically, that's the problem with Cuba—Fidel Castro." But, the next day, he claimed he had been misquoted. And, lest anyone think Ryan really disliked Castro, he and his entourage joined the bearded one for a dinner of lamb and mashed potatoes—after which Illinois officials lined up for Castro's autograph. El Presidente was clearly pleased, but sometimes his enthusiasm got the better of him. At one point, he suggested that cargo ships might someday sail from the start of the Mississippi River in Illinois all the way to Cuba. When someone pointed out that the Mississippi actually begins in Minnesota, a disbelieving Castro pulled out a big atlas. "Gee," he said, "there are many states." Yes, but only one with its own Cuba policy.



Advertisements for himself;
or Norman Mailer offends God and the devil.
(From an advertisement in "The New Yorker.")

WRITE VERSUS WRONG: A profitable slave trade is flourishing in Sudan, but the United Nations won't have to worry about it anymore. That's because, on October 26, the U.N. Economic and Social Council voted 26–14 (with twelve abstentions) to revoke the accreditation of Christian Solidarity International. CSI, a Zurich-based human rights group that has bought the freedom of more than 9,000 Sudanese women and children since 1995, has been the Sudanese slave trade's most vocal critic at the United Nations. Ostensibly, CSI was stripped of its U.N. accreditation—which allowed the nongovernmental organization the privilege of speaking, but not voting, at certain U.N. meetings—because, at a meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva earlier this year, a guest of the group, Sudanese rebel leader John Garang, submitted a statement to the committee on his own letterhead rather than that of his sponsor, CSI. But, according to CSI President Hans Stückelberger, the procedural error was a pretext. CSI's expulsion was "definitely politically motivated," says Stückelberger. Sudan "simply didn't want us meddling in their domestic affairs." Indeed, Sudan—which has a long history of antagonism with CSI, due to the group's repeated allegations that Sudan has committed massive human rights violations—led the drive to strip CSI of its accreditation. Not that Sudan didn't have any help. Human rights champions such as Algeria, China, Turkey, and Cuba—which have all had their own troubles with meddling NGOs—also supported sacking CSI. And what about Secretary-General Kofi Annan, to whom CSI has repeatedly appealed in the past, with no response? True to form, he's not said a word.

FOREIGN POLICY, REFORM PARTY-STYLE: At last, a unifying thread seems to be emerging among Reform Party presidential hopefuls: xenophobia. Pat Buchanan's America First proclivities are well-established—and sufficiently offensive that Donald Trump, Buchanan's potential rival for the Reform nomination, felt comfortable dubbing Buchanan "a Hitler lover" in an October 24 interview with NBC's Tim Russert. Last week, however, in a tête-à-tête with Tony Snow of "Fox News Sunday," Trump began to sound a little Buchananesque himself as he explained how other countries are "fleecing" the United States. He started slowly, taking aim at Japan: "The kind of money that they make from us, I mean, we are literally supporting Japan. And they're just ripping us big-league." He then moved on to France: "A terrible partner.... They are a very disloyal group in terms of their government, and I think they have to be taught respect." Then Germany:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Germany wants to take over the world economically. They failed militarily; they want to take it over." And, finally, the pièce de résistance, Saudi Arabia: "They take such advantage of us with the oil.... They have boats bigger than any boats you've ever seen, they have houses all over the world, including Palm Beach. They have houses like you've never seen before—all because we're so stupid. Hey, let them have a house, but this is getting a little ridiculous. I mean, the money they make." Houses all over the world. Huge boats. Palm Beach. You can see the Reform Party's impact on the Donald already. He's getting in touch with his class envy.

NEW HAMPSHIRE, REFORM PARTY-STYLE: Will Pat Buchanan's presidential candidacy unify the Reform Party or hopelessly divide it? The early returns from New Hampshire are in, and they augur a split. Buchanan's supporters, led by his New England coordinator, Shelly Uscinski, stomped out of the New Hampshire Reform Party's October 30 convention, vowing to set up a rival Granite State Reform Party. The ostensible cause of the quarrel between the two groups, each of which numbered a whopping 20 people, was party rules. New Hampshire party leaders had decided that new members would have to wait 30 days before voting in meetings and that the election of delegates would not take place until May or June. Uscinski and the Buchanan backers wanted new members to participate immediately and to elect delegates right away. But the real cause of the split was probably Buchanan's politics. Uscinski represents Buchananism at its rawest. As chair of the New Hampshire Christian Coalition, she campaigned to bar gays from becoming foster parents. As a member of the Merrimack School board, she championed efforts to add creationism to the science curriculum (see "Into the Wilderness," by John B. Judis, TNR, October 2, 1995). Uscinski insists there is no difference between Buchanan's views and those of the Reform Party. "I told them that Pat Buchanan's issues pretty much parallel your issues," she says. But John Talbott, the official spokesman of the New Hampshire Reform Party, doesn't buy it. "There are a number of people who have a problem with Buchanan's stands on social issues," he says. "It's not just pro-life. The sixth principle in the Reform Party constitution is about tolerance toward others." That one might be tough to reconcile.

WHAT ABOUT BOB? When New Hampshire Senator Bob Smith bolted the Republican Party last July and announced his independent presidential candidacy, the air was thick with the smoke of burning bridges. During a 50-minute tirade on the Senate floor, Smith attacked the "hypocritical" Republican Party for being beholden to consultants and pollsters and called its platform "a meaningless document that has been put out there so suckers like me ... can read it." But, just three months later, Smith, who had promised "to stay an independent, whatever happens in the future," has had a change of heart. At a November 1 press conference, he announced his return to the GOP, and, with the guilty air of a chastened schoolboy, admitted, "I was wrong." Flanked by his wife, Senator Trent Lott, Senator Orrin Hatch, and Republican National Committee Chairman Jim Nicholson (whose bitter objections to Smith's apostasy the senator had labeled "petty, vindictive, [and] insulting"), Smith compared himself to a "pioneer scout who has returned to the wagon train," convinced that the independent frontier was "more dangerous" than the familiar terrain of the Republican Party. What exactly caused this about-face? Smith has always craved the media spotlight, and, with a presidential campaign that barely registered on the radar screens of the national press, a "welcome back" party does give him some extra attention. And maybe one can even believe Smith's desire not to become a "lightning rod for divisiveness" (though that has never stopped him before). But the real reason for Smith's return appears to be simple opportunism. Although he claims to have decided to return to the GOP in early October and to have contacted party leaders to schedule a date for his return, his rather unhurried pace was accelerated by the sudden death of Senator John Chafee. Chafee's death, on October 25, opened up the late senator's chairmanship of the pork-dispensing Environment and Public Works Committee. In terms of seniority, Smith is next in line, and, as the senator himself admitted during his press conference, "it would be irresponsible for me to delay this announcement, as it could potentially jeopardize the chairmanship"—which he was given on November 2. Return to the wagon train, indeed.

WERE THEY FROM THE SAME PEOPLE?:

"Without exaggeration, we've received 5,000 pledges of support. They've come from Republicans, Democrats, independents. It's unbelievable. We're not equipped to handle it."

—Senator Bob Smith, in July, describing the reaction to his decision to leave the Republican Party.

"And I've received thousands of calls, faxes, letters, e-mails from people who agree with me that as conservative Americans, we need to unite and advance a strong, forceful agenda...."

—Smith, at the November 1 press conference announcing his decision to rejoin the GOP.

HOME NEWS I: With Andrew Sullivan's column this week, we initiate a series of TRBs by eminent TNR contributors that will last for the next several months. Collect them all.

HOME NEWS II: TNR re-extends its call to readers to send in dueling headlines (two contradictory headlines printed on or around the same day) or boring headlines. Special kudos will be granted for contradictory headlines on the same day, in the same paper. Readers who find contradictory headlines on the same day, in the same paper, by the same author will immediately be offered positions on staff.

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS: Last week, due to an editing error, an article by John Solomon ("Prize Fight," November 15) referred to a federal judge in Mississippi as the brother of former Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour. The judge is Barbour's cousin. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

On the Hill

Mr. Popularity

By AMY KELLER

LAST MONTH, WHILE headlines trumpeted Republican Senator John McCain's very public squabble with his party over campaign finance, Senator Russell Feingold of Wisconsin was fighting the same battle with his fellow Democrats—only behind closed doors. A few days before the Senate essentially killed the McCain-Feingold campaign finance reform bill, a group of Democratic senators met on the second floor of the Capitol in the stately Lyndon Baines Johnson Room to discuss the legislation. Many of those assembled criticized the bill's latest incarnation, which did include a ban on soft money but did not have a provision cracking down on issue ads. Ostensibly, they wanted the bill to be stronger. In reality, they wanted it to be strong enough that it could not possibly pass. Feingold implored his colleagues to accept the current version.

THOMAS FUCHS

But New Jersey Senator Robert Torricelli, the Senate Democrats' fund-raiser-in-chief and the Democrat most responsible for eventually scuttling McCain-Feingold, was having none of it. Torricelli laid into Feingold with a harsh tongue-lashing. As one source privy to the exchange put it, Torricelli "made it very clear that, had we all lived according to Feingold's principles, several of us wouldn't be here, including Feingold."

This was not the first time Feingold had been made to feel like a pariah in his own party. Indeed, while it is by now conventional wisdom that Republicans dislike McCain, Feingold's immense unpopularity among Democrats is less well-known. And the reasons for his unpopularity go beyond campaign finance reform. Almost from the first day he entered the Senate, in 1993, Feingold has been angering members of his own party with what one Democrat calls his "holier-than-thou attitude" and another terms his "moral one-upmanship." In 1995 Feingold pushed for a ban on gifts from lobbyists. He often singles out pieces of pork-barrel legislation for criticism. Earlier this year he raised eyebrows by voting with Republicans on a procedural matter during President Clinton's impeachment trial.

None of these stands has endeared Feingold to his fellow Democrats. "In the Democratic caucus, he's treated like a red-headed stepkid at the family picnic," says one Democratic aide. "There's huge resentment." And that resentment is not helping the cause Feingold champions. As Democratic Senator Mary Landrieu of Louisiana—who supports campaign finance reform but has objected to some of Feingold's tactics in promoting it—says, Feingold's behavior "is not the way to win friends and influence people."

To be sure, some of Feingold's unpopularity stems from the fact that, as a reformer, it's his job to rankle his colleagues. As Feingold himself concedes, "On occasion, I have done things that make me not likely to win the Mr. Popularity contest in the caucus." But, even for a reformer, he is unusually unpopular. Compare the way Democratic senators view Feingold to the way they regard another reformer, Minnesota Senator Paul Wellstone. "They love Paul Wellstone," says one Democratic insider. "They don't agree with [him] a lot of times ... but he's personally widely liked. He never makes [his colleagues] feel that he's distinguishing himself on a personal level. He's passionate. He jumps up and down and screams ... but they don't think he's playing the game at their expense." That's one reason why, as one prominent Democrat explains, "Wellstone can out-reform Feingold on any issue."

In a sense, Feingold's problem is even greater than McCain's. McCain's unpopularity with his GOP colleagues is partially counteracted by his love affair with the press. He is a poor inside player but an effective outside one. Feingold, on the other hand, gets along with reporters scarcely better than he does with his fellow senators. One reason is that he has taken a backseat to McCain on the Sunday talk-show circuit, leaving the campaign finance limelight to his press-hungry Republican friend. "Half a dozen junior senators in that position would be clawing over McCain to get to the mike first," notes one Capitol Hill observer. "Not Russ. He defers to McCain in almost all public appearances." But it's more than just humility that accounts for his bad press relations. "He's a cold fish," says one journalist who covers Feingold. "There's nothing particularly passionate or admirable about him."

AMY KELLER is a senior staff writer at *Roll Call*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Indeed, Feingold's detachment accounts for much of his unpopularity on Capitol Hill. "Russ is aloof and standoffish," says Larry Sabato, a professor of political science at the University of Virginia, who first met Feingold in 1977 at Oxford, where both men were Rhodes scholars. "He's not a backslapper. Russ isn't going to sweep people off their feet and make tons of friends." Sabato recalls spying Feingold, at the 1996 Democratic National Convention, strolling around the convention floor all by himself. "He's a bit of a loner," Sabato says.

This means that Democrats tend not to forgive Feingold when he takes stands with which they disagree. During Clinton's impeachment trial, after Feingold crossed party lines to vote with Republicans on a procedural issue, he was the recipient of some very public ribbing when he did subsequently vote with his party. "Hey, Feingold! Feingold!" Wellstone bellowed across the Senate floor after one vote. "You sure, Feingold? You sure, Feingold?" The senator from Wisconsin turned red and said nothing.

Not that Feingold is always so reticent. He's recently made a habit of taking to the Senate floor for, as he labels it, "the calling of the bankroll." For 17 different pieces of legislation, Feingold has publicly scrolled through a list of soft money contributions that various industries have donated to party committees. By doing so, he hopes to illustrate the link between campaign contributions and legislation. But some Democrats interpret Feingold's performance as a direct attack on their characters. When he recently called the bankroll for a bill that would prevent the government from collecting more royalties from the oil and gas industries—reading off the soft money contributions from companies such as BP Amoco and Chevron—Landrieu, who supported the legislation, retaliated. "I don't think those statements have helped in building the spirit of the [Democratic] caucus," she said.

THERE'S NOTHING WRONG with putting one's colleagues on the spot when they do special favors for big business. But part of Democrats' resentment of Feingold comes from a suspicion that he doesn't always live up to his own high standards. During his 1998 reelection campaign, Feingold made a big show of refusing to accept financial help from the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee. When the committee produced independent issue ads attacking his GOP opponent, Representative Mark Neumann, Feingold—who had pledged to spend only $1 for each voter in Wisconsin—demanded that they be taken off the air. But, while he was scoring political points for refusing federal party funds, Feingold was also receiving more than $100,000 in last-minute "coordinated expenditures" from the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. No, the money wasn't directly from the national party, but it wasn't necessarily from the cheese state, either. The dollars actually flowed from the Democratic National Committee's soft money coffers to the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, which subsequently transferred the money to a federal account for Feingold's benefit.

A case of mild hypocrisy? Perhaps. But what's revealing about this unflattering little story isn't so much its content as its source: a member of Feingold's own party. ■

New York Dispatch

Bidding Goodbye

By LEE SIEGEL

MONEY, THE ROMAN emperor Vespasian famously said, has no odor. But cupidity does, so it was fitting that the Christie's auction of "The Personal Property of Marilyn Monroe" was sponsored by International Flavors & Fragrances. Having gotten things covered in the olfactory department, the auction house fabricated a civilized setting for the eye and the ear. There were the tastefully presented Christie's women, predominantly blonde, done up in little black dresses and sporting the occasional pearl choker indicating rank; and there was a healthy sprinkling of British accents, culminating in the buffed and leisured purr of the evening's auctioneer: the chairman of Christie's International, Lord Hindlip. But all this high polish didn't so much conceal the atmosphere of raw getting as mildly agitate it, which was the idea, anyway, just as the subtlest perfume doesn't so much disguise the primal scents as lead you to them with greater accuracy.

"No one of note," a newspaper reporter behind me said authoritatively into his cell phone as he surveyed the crowd, "just the one drag queen." Much to the media gaggle's dismay, there was very little glamour or glitter or eye-catching style around; most of the big money seemed to be conveying its bids from afar to the young men and women operating the phones from a dark-paneled booth that ran the length of a side wall, situated under a series of oversized photographs of Monroe playing for the camera. The people who actually attended the auction seemed to be the "small investors," elevated by the remarkably buoyant stock market, to whom the media alludes so often in a spirit of commercial celebration.

I myself was not looking at the drag queen, but at a man sitting a few rows behind him. His hard aquiline profile, his creased, weathered voluptuary's aspect, made his features seem both cruel and sorrowful. A surfeit of sensation as a simulacrum of wisdom—his face could not explain itself to his mind. It was an old European face, yet it seemed to capture this particular American moment.

For a wisp of old European ennui and decadence began to expand through the rambunctiously American room. The audience seemed restless and distracted, as if tired of what they habitually found themselves doing. People were talking among themselves, staring into space, looking around. It happened that this was the same night as the fourth game of the World Series, and, when someone in the private galleries upstairs held up to the window a placard that read, "No score on Yankees top of 2nd," the audience dissolved into laughter

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and chatter for several minutes, completely ignoring the bidding. From the thrilling, doomed girl to the exciting, promising game in a nanosecond: Such is the fluidity of celebrity and of celebrated events.

The auction itself had to do with Marilyn's celebrity, which has very little to do with her as an actress, even as a famous actress. Celebrity has to do with you: it makes the big, strange world instantly familiar. There is nothing necessarily crass about wanting to have the things a famous person—not a celebrity—once had: they are mementos of hard work and luck and guile and achievement. Thirty-seven thousand dollars for three pairs of blue jeans Monroe once wore in a movie? If you have that kind of money to throw away, there are more frivolous purchases you could make than one that might put you in mind of a different, larger destiny than your own. But these blue jeans were bought by the clothing designer Tommy Hilfiger, who immediately deposited them into the interests and concerns of Tommy Hilfiger. "They had a great fit," he told *The New York Times* about the jeans, "a great patina, a great fabric, a great hand feel." Massimo Ferragamo, of the Ferragamo shoe company, came away with a pair of Ferragamo red stiletto heels for $42,000. "It's a good form of reinvestment," the Florentine businessman explained. And on and on: As Lord Hindlip elocuted his way through the 55 lots of the auction's first night, item after item dropped out of the orbit of specific fame, through the bland, leveling atmosphere of celebrity, into the narrow precincts of whatever self had obtained them. (Or whatever fancy, showboating cause: An ermine coat and a stole trimmed with fox fur were both dramatically sold to benefit the World Wildlife Fund.)

THE EVENING'S FINAL lot was, predictably, the "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" dress, worn on the occasion of JFK's forty-fifth birthday, which was celebrated on May 19, 1962, at Madison Square Garden. For this very special moment, Christie's turned the lights down low, projected a slide showing Monroe—from behind—singing on the Garden's stage, and played a recording of her performance. The crowd murmured and gasped and giggled and, as the bids rose higher and higher, cheered with approval, roaring boisterously at the $1 million mark. Its response spilled wildly over the occasion; it seemed distracted from the object of its attention by the object of its attention.

The crowd had become bored with itself. And the evening's touch of decadence now surged into a dominant note of decadence. Because this was not 1962, a time when few Americans knew the truth about Monroe's life and no Americans knew the facts of Monroe's future. This was 1999, when just about everyone in the audience must have known that Monroe was all doped up on that eerie stage, that she had been handed around by the president and the president's brother and their gangster and Hollywood friends. Everyone must have known that she was only months away from committing suicide. But the roaring continued, some men in the audience pumping their fists in the air as the bidding ended at $1,150,000.

The moment the lights went back up, the reporters around me ran. They sped toward the man, thin and sharp-eyed and smoothly assembled, who had bought the fabled dress. Who are you? they cried. There was an expectant pause. Well, he replied, I'm Bob Schagrin, and I own Gotta Have It! Collectibles on East 57th Street. The reporters stared in disbelief. A merchant? Not a studio mogul, or a star, or a billionaire, or an enigma? A *merchant*? We stood there for a moment, face to face not with magical, transporting glamour but with ourselves. You felt that everyone present—even the store owner—would have given anything for a distraction that would lift us out of ourselves.

Still, the next day, the papers and the news shows were full of stories about star sightings at the auction; about magical, transporting glamour; about the dazzle and the tingle and the glitter in the room. They were full of tales about the glorious staying power of American distractions. But the reporters who wrote and broadcast the stories knew the truth of the matter. I could see on their faces that they knew. It was just that they would not allow their faces to explain themselves to their minds. ■

Campaign Journal

Stage Presence

By DANA MILBANK

HANOVER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

SENATOR JOHN MCCAIN'S mission in two Republican presidential debates over the past week was fairly straightforward. He had to look "presidential," as his advisers put it. Given the company, this did not prove terribly burdensome.

For one thing, McCain benefited from sharing the stage with Orrin Hatch and Gary Bauer, who rated support levels of zero percent and one percent, respectively, in the latest New Hampshire poll, by *The Boston Herald*. Worse for these two gentlemen, the poll had a margin of error of five percentage points, raising the troubling metaphysical possibility that Hatch and Bauer had the backing of *negative* five percent and four percent of New Hampshire voters, respectively.

McCain also profited from the fact that the other Republican candidate who seems presidential was AWOL. True, George W. Bush had promised to attend an award ceremony for his wife on the night of the second debate, but nobody seemed to buy his excuse—particularly after Laura Bush, in a pre-debate interview on New Hampshire television, confessed that, if Governor Bush had *really* needed to go to the debate, "I'd have said, 'Sure, we can work it out.'" When the governor, in the same interview, justified his absence by declaring, "I love my wife," a ripple of laughter spread among the journalists who had gathered in the pressroom before the debate.

Finally—and this one can't be overestimated—McCain was aided by what I'll call the Keyes Effect. This holds that anybody, even Linda Tripp or Donald Trump, would sound presidential debating Alan Keyes. Keyes attended both

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

debates with two bodyguards, men who called themselves his "advance team" but who, I imagined, were responsible for making sure the excitable Keyes did not douse himself with gasoline and light a match. When Keyes spoke, you could sometimes catch McCain and Steve Forbes, as well as various audience members, stifling concerned smiles, as if a man had begun singing on their subway car. He seemed harmless, but what if there were explosives strapped to his chest?

To measure the Keyes Effect on McCain, I watched the first big debate, in Durham, New Hampshire, on October 22, with members of the Arizona senator's campaign. Keyes seemed to be struggling to stay in his chair, waving his arms frantically and opening his eyes wide, and McCain, the unlucky one seated next to him, appeared to be trying to inch away. The acoustics were bad in the listening room, so I frequently had to ask the McCain aides what Keyes was saying. "He's speaking in tongues," one of them explained, then translated: "If only those voices in my head would stop!"

Whether it's the Keyes Effect, the Bush no-shows, or the mere presence of Hatch and Bauer, things seem to be going McCain's way. He's gaining on Bush (polls in New Hampshire show his support at nearly 30 percent). And some in the press believe Bush is heading for his "Gore moment," a time when he can do no right. Karl Rove, Bush's top strategist, argues that, while it's historically inevitable that a frontrunner in Bush's position wins the nomination, "almost as inevitably, there's a bump along the way. Where it will be, I don't know."

Bush, paradoxically, may catch the same bug that infected Gore: Clinton fatigue. "He's our Clinton," says a Bauer adviser. Bush is Clintonian in the best sense: he's got charm, he's a moderate, and he has run a state with success. But his opponents also see the darker side of Clintonism in Bush: cockiness, impulsiveness, evasiveness, Vietnam avoidance, and triangulation. "While Bush is out checking the latest tracking poll on which cardigan to wear, we're out changing America," says McCain strategist Mike Murphy. "After Clintonism, authentic candidates are going to be more attractive."

Rove calls such efforts to link Bush to Clinton "laughable," adding, "They've been trying to do it for a number of months, and our numbers continue to go up." But that doesn't stop them from trying. When Pat Buchanan quit the Republican Party, McCain issued a statement that said: "Too many of my party's leaders [read: Bush] made the mistake of trying to appease Buchanan.... Running for president should not simply be about polls and political calculation. That is Clintonism. Our party must stand on principle." Now Forbes is trying to tie Bush to Clinton through his tax record. A Bush ad claimed the governor reduced state-government spending, but Forbes made the case, supported by various news reports, that Bush *increased* spending by 36 percent, "greater than Bill Clinton's 21 percent increase over his first six years." Even Clinton, perhaps aware that he's become a pariah, tried to hurt Bush by likening the governor to himself, praising Bush's "good instincts."

Bush isn't the only one threatened by McCain's moment. In an unusual primary twist, McCain may actually hurt Bill Bradley. Some 37 percent of the New Hampshire electorate

READING MIXED SIGNALS

Ambivalence in American Public Opinion about Government

Albert H. Cantril and Susan Davis Cantril

"When it comes to their preferred role for government, many Americans manage to be both conservative and liberal at the same time . . . *Reading Mixed Signals* offers an up-to-date and comprehensive analysis of this fascinating paradox which has proven to be an enduring feature of American public opinion."
—Michael Kagay, *New York Times*

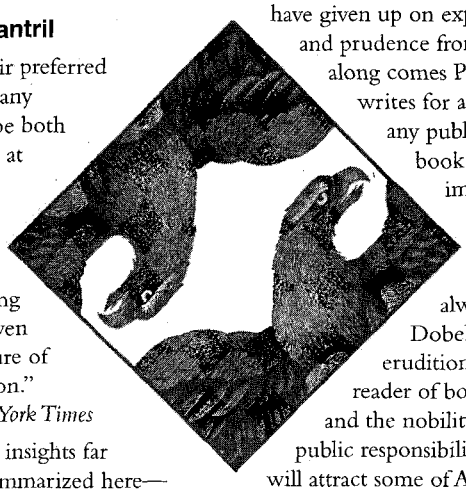
"This volume—rich in insights far beyond what can be summarized here—imparts one lesson no politician or political reporter should ever forget. People think in more than one dimension."—David Broder, *Washington Post*

Woodrow Wilson Center Press

$18.95 paperback

PUBLIC INTEGRITY

J. Patrick Dobel



"Just when Americans in great numbers have given up on expecting integrity and prudence from public officials along comes Pat Dobel. He writes for anyone holding any public office but the book is even more important for non-office holding citizens. Never preachy, but always demanding, Dobel's accessible erudition persuades the reader of both the difficulty and the nobility of holding public responsibility. *Public Integrity* will attract some of America's finest into public life. It's that good."—John E. Brandl, Dean, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

$38.00 hardcover

POLITICAL PARTIES AND CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT

Remaking American Democracy

Sidney M. Milkis

Sidney Milkis explores the uneasy relationship between the Constitution and the party system to advance a novel argument: political parties arose as part of a deliberate program of constitutional reform.

Interpreting American Politics
Michael Nelson, Series Editor

$17.95 paperback

JUDICIAL POLITICS IN THE D.C. CIRCUIT COURT

Christopher P. Banks

Because of its location, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia has evolved into a court where cases on administrative law predominate. Christopher Banks explains that this unique role evolved largely as a result of the politics of the nation's capital.

$38.00 hardcover

Available at bookstores • **THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESS** • 1-800-537-5487 • www.press.jhu.edu

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are registered independents, and both men are focusing on that group. Asked whether he's competing with Bradley for independent voters, McCain replied: "I think so ... I think there may be a kind of a second contest going." Both Bradley and McCain strolled with Granny D—Doris Haddock, a famed New Hampshire campaign finance reformer. McCain even needled Bradley about his reversal on ethanol subsidies. "He may have found himself on the road to Damascus—or the road to Des Moines," McCain said.

Bradley's advisers, though they acknowledge competing with McCain, say that few independents are genuinely free of party leanings. "It's way overblown," says Mark Longabaugh, Bradley's New Hampshire man. Bradley, when I asked him about vying for independents, replied: "I'm not segmenting the market."

FOR MUCH THE same reason, Gore's advisers see a potential benefit from McCain's rise in New Hampshire. The closer the Republican race becomes, the fewer independents will vote for Bradley in the Democratic primary. But Gore is only cheering for McCain to a point. If the Arizona senator were actually to defeat Bush—still a remote possibility—he might prove a more formidable opponent in the general election. McCain has more experience, both in foreign policy and overall, than Bush does. And McCain can co-opt Democratic issues—notably campaign finance—and highlight Gore's vulnerability on the Clinton administration's fundraising abuses. "McCain does a better job of appealing to independents, so Bush is probably the candidate we'd rather face," reasons Jim Demers, a Gore activist in New Hampshire. McCain's reform talk, he admits, "does hit a nerve."

At a smart-aleck event on the day before the Hanover debate, McCain's campaign held a press conference featuring some cornstalks, some sugarcane, and a rusty black oil barrel (a BUSH FOR PRESIDENT sticker was put on the barrel but removed before the event). McCain then argued that the three industries' soft money contributions, $23.6 million over four years, produced $12.8 billion in government breaks. McCain proposed cutting the breaks and using the proceeds to fund a voucher program—taking a swipe at Bush, who would fund his vouchers with public school money. It was a twofer: McCain at once appeared more attractive to moderates than Bush and holier-than-Gore on soft money.

Gore will have problems of his own making, regardless of his opponent. Even Naomi Wolf couldn't add much spice to the vice president in his October 27 debate with Bradley. The two candidates haggled over price tags and magnified small distinctions. Typical of the night were the five "Reality Checks" the Gore campaign distributed to reporters during the debate. "Reality: Bradley failed to support a bill to reduce logging in the Tongas forest," said one. So the Democrats' bid to differentiate themselves had come to this: nitpicking in New Hampshire over an obscure bill about an Alaskan forest. Fortunately for Gore, Bradley wasn't flawless either. When asked for his models of leadership, he offered Jimmy Carter, Woodrow Wilson, and Mikhail Gorbachev: a moralizing loner, a failed egghead, and a Communist who presided over his empire's collapse.

The Republicans have the opposite problem. In their debates, there were so many divergent views on so many issues that they couldn't muster a sustained argument. Hatch was a disaster, shouting, rambling, and at one point boasting, Gore-like, that he "created the modern generic drug industry." Forbes scored points as Bush's attacker. But it was Keyes who stole the show—or, rather, hijacked it. Asked about drugs, he appeared to blame property rights and proliferating laws. He railed about the "rat hole of United Nations waste" and "the socialist income tax," which he would abolish. On taxes, he asked the audience how much the government should take; the audience, thinking the question rhetorical, didn't respond. Keyes erupted: "How much? Answer it!" After the event, he stormed into the pressroom, where he declared himself "deadly sick" of the coverage of his campaign.

Keyes was a good foil for McCain, who spoke about attracting pro-choice voters, rebuilding the military, the need for service to country, and the urgency of reform. After Keyes's pressroom tirade, McCain strolled in and declined reporters' invitations to swipe at Bush. "We'll let the voters of New Hampshire decide that," he demurred. He sounded downright presidential—relatively speaking, of course. ■

The GOP gets one right, sort of.

Security Guard

By JONATHAN CHAIT

THE ANNUAL BUDGETARY fight between the president and Congress has, this year, boiled down to a heretofore arcane accounting question: Should Social Security be counted as part of the federal budget or separate from it? This topic used to interest almost nobody outside the pocket-protector crowd. This fall it has precipitated a partisan jihad, with Republicans—in a reversal of their usual role—accusing Democrats of robbing old ladies of their pensions, and Democrats accusing Republicans of gross intellectual dishonesty.

The question of whether or not to exclude Social Security from the federal budget was first broached by the Republicans, who arrived at their position in a roundabout way. Last spring, they planned to corner President Clinton by passing a large tax cut and daring him to incur the wrath of the voters by vetoing it. But Clinton took the dare—and the voters remained unwrathful. So the congressional Republican leadership fell back on Plan B: force Clinton to abide by the austere spending cuts mandated by the Balanced Budget Act of 1997 and brand him a big spender if he asked for one nickel more. Alas, that maneuver failed, too: the cuts

JONATHAN CHAIT is a fellow at the New America Foundation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were so severe that even many conservatives in Congress blanched.

Now the Republicans have drawn a final line in the sand. They vow not to spend any part of the budget surplus that derives from Social Security taxes. And, since President Clinton wants to spend more money than the Republicans do on some programs, they claim he is raiding Social Security money to pay for big government. To drive the point home, the GOP has broadcast commercials portraying the congressional Democrats as burglars pilfering money from the Social Security safe.

Even by the standards of attack ads, the Republican claim is dishonest. First of all, spending the Social Security surplus will not rob Gramps of his check, as both parties have been spending the surplus for 30 years with no ill effect on retirees. Second, the White House budget does not touch the Social Security surplus. Third—and this is the truly Orwellian part—the Republicans *are* spending the Social Security surplus on government programs. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO), which calculates the cost of everything Congress does, determined that the bills passed by the Republican majority are so costly that they require the government to borrow from Social Security—to do, in effect, precisely what the congressional Republicans have insisted must not be done.

ROBERT NEUBECKER

So Congress told the CBO to do the calculations again—and, this time, to subtract several billion dollars from the result so that the numbers would come out right. (This is called "directed scorekeeping"; essentially, Congress has the legal right to make the CBO do anything it wants, even if that means pretending certain budget items don't really exist.) The CBO dutifully followed its orders, as it must, allowing House Speaker Dennis Hastert to trumpet its new report as a vindication of his position. "Some may say these calculations don't fit together," he told *The Wall Street Journal*—neglecting to mention that "some" encompassed every independent analyst, including the very agency he claimed was backing him up—"but the bottom line . . . is we protect the Social Security trust fund."

Among the opinion-making classes, the flimflammery is so transparent that it has created a backlash. Media accounts have rightfully poured scorn on the Republican tactic, but, in so doing, they have also dismissed the entire notion of maintaining the Social Security surplus. And that is unfortunate. While the Republicans may not have pure motives, they are actually standing up for a momentous and beneficent principle. Moving Social Security off-budget would strengthen it. Conservatives and liberals are so preoccupied with partisan exigencies that they are actually taking up positions antithetical to their convictions.

In 1935, when Franklin D. Roosevelt devised Social Security, he wanted to keep it separate from other government programs in order to prevent future presidents from cutting it. So, rather than funding it from the normal stream of federal revenue, he created a new payroll tax whose sole purpose was to fund Social Security. In addition, he structured the program on a "pay as you go" basis. This meant that, instead of each generation setting aside payroll taxes to fund its own benefits, all payroll taxes would immediately fund benefits for current retirees. The Social Security recipients of, say, 1957 would be supported by the workforce of 1957, and, when the workers of 1957 retired, they would be supported by whoever was paying taxes then.

Eventually it became clear that this arrangement was structurally unfair, because not all generations are equal in size. The baby-boomers, for instance, formed a very large contingent of workers and would have had little trouble paying for the retirement of their far less numerous parents. But, when the boomers retired, their benefits would have to be paid for by the smaller generation of "baby bust" workers, who would have to pay very high payroll taxes. To rectify this injustice, President Reagan and Congress agreed in 1983 to raise payroll taxes significantly higher than was necessary to fund current benefits. The extra taxes from workers would go into the Social Security trust fund, and, when the boomers eventually retired, they could draw upon the built-up reserves. Payroll taxes would still, in the long run, match Social Security benefits, but the equilibrium would work itself out across generations, not merely within them.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The trouble was that, during the '80s and most of the '90s, the rest of the budget was running huge deficits. Since extra money was now sloshing around in the Social Security trust fund, and since the trust fund was technically part of the overall federal budget, it helped mask the deficit's true size. Instead of putting the higher Social Security taxes aside to help save for the baby-boomers' retirement, Congress used them, in effect, to keep other taxes low—and to put off the day of reckoning on our growing national debt. (Actually, the extent to which this is true depends on what you think would have happened if there were no Social Security surplus. If you think we would have let the deficit run that much higher, then we were still "saving" the Social Security surplus to pay for the retirement of future generations. If you think we would have raised taxes or cut spending to bring the deficit down to a more reasonable level, then we were taking the Social Security surplus and using it to pay for other programs. The truth is probably somewhere in between.)

In case your eyes are beginning to glaze over, here's the essential point: the flaws with the Social Security trust fund stemmed from the fact that it was mixed in with the rest of the budget. But today the Republicans are taking advantage of good economic times to turn Social Security once again into a distinct, almost sacrosanct category. This year, Social Security is projected to take in $161 billion more than it spends, while the rest of the budget is projected to take in $14 billion more than it spends. The GOP is saying it can spend the $14 billion on federal programs, but not a dime of the $161 billion. That money would go, instead, toward reducing the national debt.

Put aside, for a moment, the fact that the congressional Republicans are only pretending to do this. The concept itself makes sense. The point of running a surplus in Social Security is to lighten the burden on future workers. Reducing the national debt does two things that make it easier for future workers to support retired baby-boomers. First, it lowers the government's interest payments on the national debt, freeing up money in the budget—and thus making it easier for the regular budget to pay back all the money it has borrowed from Social Security. Second, the money that the government would otherwise borrow to finance public debt becomes free for investment by the private sector, which increases productivity and makes for a more prosperous future economy.

Liberals have two arguments against this. First, they claim that using the Social Security surplus to pay down the debt will not alleviate Social Security's fiscal woes. This is true only in the narrow sense that, in the Social Security accounts, it doesn't matter whether the national debt is $10 trillion or zero. Somehow, no matter what, the government will make good on the IOUs to future retirees. But surely the level of national debt affects our ability to bail out Social Security in the future. Suppose you have a student loan that you need to begin paying next year and a credit card debt that you need to pay right now. Paying off the credit card debt—as opposed to, say, splurging on a new beach house—would not affect the amount of money you owe on your student loan, but it would make it a lot easier to handle next year.

The second objection is that, sure, paying down the debt would help Social Security, but, if we spend a few billion bucks of the Social Security surplus, it won't kill anybody. That's true, and, in an ideal world, we wouldn't have to choose between necessary spending and debt reduction. But it's probably worth sacrificing a bit of spending to establish a principle in the public's mind.

It's worth it because there is a sneakily liberal long-term benefit to keeping Social Security off-budget. It would force the government to pay down debt for approximately the next ten years—which, if the economy holds up, is an ideal time to do so. But after that, remember, Social Security is going to start dipping into the red. If the current fiscal dogma—that the budget deficit must be zero every single year—holds, then we will face the unpalatable choice of slashing either Social Security or everything else the federal government does. But, if Social Security is thought of as a separate budgetary item—on behalf of which the public did without for several years—then it will be allowed to run deficits during a lean period and draw on the surpluses it's building up now. This would also help protect it from GOP efforts to "save" Social Security by privatizing it.

Of course, there's a danger that the consensus against spending Social Security surpluses could grow so extreme that it would prevent the government from borrowing during wartime or recession. But most people give the government slack during a crisis. And, if the Democrats continue to explain their restraint as saving up during good times, it should inculcate in the voters an understanding of the need for deficits in hard times. In the long run, then, the GOP plan would move us toward a more flexible, intelligent kind of budget and away from the mindless, zero-deficit fetishism that Republicans have done so much to foster. Shhh. Nobody tell Denny Hastert. ■

Kaifeng Dispatch

East of Eden

By James Harding

As a member of a widely dispersed Jewish family of Central European descent, I am accustomed to calling on distant, long-forgotten relations when visiting a foreign town. Nonetheless, when family and friends told me there was a group of Chinese Jews living in Kaifeng—an industrial city located on the middle reaches of the Yellow River in central China—and that I should look them up once I got there, I had my doubts. Jews? In China? The citizens of Kaifeng whom I queried upon my

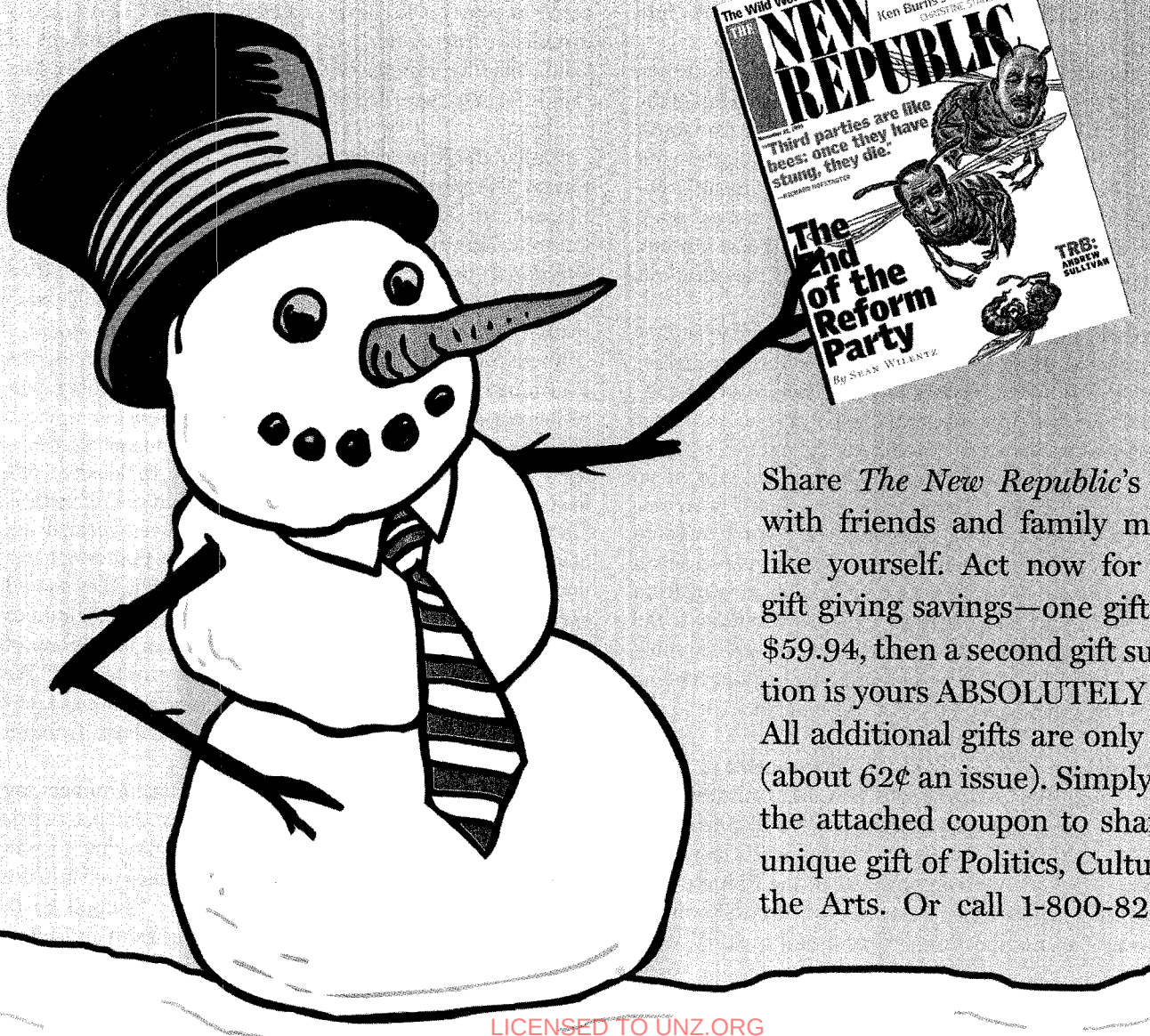
James Harding is media editor at *The Financial Times* and has just completed his assignment as the newspaper's Shanghai correspondent.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Give the Gift of Politics, Culture, and the Arts....

THE NEW REPUBLIC

It's provocative and exciting, skeptical and quotable. It always fits. It's never returned. It lasts a whole year. It's guaranteed to please. And when you order several, you'll save 50% off the regular price.


The Wild Words of Louis Armstrong ALBERT MURRAY
W.'s Clinton Problem
Ken Burns's Nostalgia
THE NEW REPUBLIC
"Third parties are like bees: once they have stung, they die."
The End of the Reform Party
By SEAN WILENTZ
TRB: ANDREW SULLIVAN

Share *The New Republic*'s insight with friends and family members like yourself. Act now for special gift giving savings—one gift is only $59.94, then a second gift subscription is yours ABSOLUTELY FREE! All additional gifts are only $29.97 (about 62¢ an issue). Simply fill out the attached coupon to share your unique gift of Politics, Culture, and the Arts. Or call 1-800-827-1289.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arrival were just as incredulous. "I've never met any," a young street vendor in pink hot pants selling warm bottles of Coke told me. Still, she added, perhaps trying to be helpful, "I have *heard* of them." Finally, after much fruitless searching, I was directed to Qingming Shanghe Park, where the municipal government has set up a sort of theme-park-style reconstruction of old-world China that was said to include an exhibit on the city's Jewish population. There, in a one-room building at the farthest corner of the park, I was introduced to the curator of the exhibit: a stocky Chinese man with the physique of an aging Popeye and the facial characteristics of a cheery Kazakh. "My name is Moshe," he said warmly, handing me his card. "Moshe Xingwang Zhang," it read. "Jewish Diaspora. Kaifeng City No. 15 Middle School, Physical Education Teacher, Coach of Wrestling, Wushu and Kungfu."

Moshe—as he insisted I call him—explained that he was a descendent of Jewish traders who had arrived in Kaifeng sometime during the eleventh century and decided to stay. For the next eight centuries they maintained a separate Jewish identity. To pedants of Jewish law, of course, the Kaifeng Jews are not deserving of that name. Early on, they took Chinese husbands and wives and Chinese names. They passed their ancestral heritage from father to son, rather than matrilineally. And, by the early 1800s, the last rabbi had passed away, along with the few remaining readers of Hebrew, and the local synagogue began to fall into disrepair.

Moshe's own knowledge of Jewish custom is fuzzy at best. As I started to take a photograph of him, he darted out of the frame to grab a straw hat. "We Jews wear hats," he explained. Later, over dinner at a restaurant, he exclaimed loudly to our waitress, "No meat! No meat! We Jews don't eat meat." Ironically, because he told authorities that he does not eat pork, his official papers list him as a "Hui," or Chinese Muslim. ("Jew" is not among the officially recognized classifications from which the authorities can choose.)

Nevertheless, Moshe is undeterred. "I don't mind what they say, what they write on my papers. My father and grandfather were Jewish. My ancestors were Jewish. I want to go to Israel, learn Hebrew, and come back and teach my son and other people about our Jewish ancestors." And, in a sense, whether Moshe is in fact Jewish is less interesting than why he so much wants to be. His quest for religious identity is an esoteric expression of one of the most powerful cultural forces to sweep China in recent years: a wave of religious revivalism that has prompted the Chinese to turn to faiths ranging from Christianity to Buddhism, from the oldest superstitions to the latest crackpot gurus. Hundreds of millions are seeking spiritual meaning in a country where communism no longer offers guidance and capitalism offers mostly confusion.

THAT CHINA SHOULD undergo such a revival is a historical anomaly. The Christian missionaries of the last century—who, by their own admission, achieved only modest results in China—often complained of the Chinese people's lack of religiosity. To Western eyes, the followers of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism had a casual pick-and-mix relationship with their religions. "The Chinese are not naturally a religious people. A vague piety is cultivated, but the frontiers of faith are ill-defined," one foreign writer says of the missionary endeavors in China. And H.A. Giles, writing at the beginning of the century with the sweeping certainty that has often characterized the field of sinology, which he helped to found, concluded that "the Chinese are emphatically not a religious people."

If there was an instinctive disdain for religious orthodoxy in traditional China, the Communist revolution of 1949 cemented it. In the years following, the government launched an aggressive campaign to repudiate religion in favor of "scientific atheism." Christianity, which the Communists associated with feudalism and foreigners, was singled out for particular repression. In the early '50s, the government alleged that five Canadian nuns had murdered 2,000 Chinese babies. During the Cultural Revolution, young guards smashed the stained-glass windows of Shanghai's grand St. Ignatius cathedral and then turned the building into a state warehouse.

TO APPRECIATE THE extent to which times have changed, you need only visit St. Ignatius today—but you'll have to come early to get a seat. The once-empty cathedral is now often crammed with some 6,000 parishioners, who come to pray on its newly refurbished pews below newly installed frosted-glass windowpanes. The government of China may be atheist, explains St. Ignatius's Brother Bai, "but in society there are more and more people who believe in Christ."

Similar Christian communities are mushrooming across China. The government calculates that some ten million Chinese are Protestant and that some four million are Catholic. However, it is estimated that there are 20 million additional underground Protestants and eight million underground Catholics, who refuse to adhere to such state restrictions on their religion as the rejection of the pope.

About 600 miles up the coast from Shanghai, in the charming city of Dalian, Liu Shuzhen, a 60-something pensioner whose family has scattered across China and abroad, practices an altogether different religion. Shuzhen is a devotee of a Buddhist sect called the Tranquil Earth Society, a follower of an exiled Shanghainese monk whom she refers to as Jin Kong. Liu and her fellow adherents do not eat meat, drink alcohol, or smoke. They follow a strict chart that designates days of observance and provides advice on when they should travel, make investments, move house, etc. Liu either studies Jin's works in her shrine at home or gathers in a group of between three and 30 people in a local home or temple. "We meet and talk. We study together. We learn from his teachings on healing the world," she says. These days, Tranquil Earth is her family.

Liu is part of a growing crowd. The official numbers say there are more than 100 million Buddhists in China, but, privately, academics suggest the numbers adhering to one branch of Buddhist teaching or another reaches well into the hundreds of millions. Devotional sects like Tranquil Earth are sprouting across the country. They range from innocuous

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

associations studying Chinese martial arts and the teachings of Buddha to obsessional cults that devote themselves to messianic leaders—such as the dozen people in Sichuan who were reported by the local newspapers to have committed mass suicide by jumping into a pond, convinced by their master that this was the gateway to heaven.

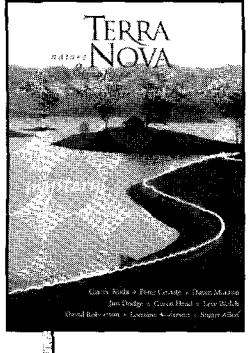
Perhaps no group has made a greater impression on the government, however, than the devotees of Falun Gong, who practice an offshoot of *qigong*—a mixture of Chinese breathing exercises, controlled physical movements, and spiritual reflection. On April 25, the group stunned China's leadership by staging a 10,000-person peaceful demonstration in the heart of Beijing.

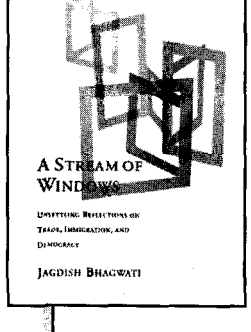
The group was merely calling for official recognition, and, on its face, Falun Gong hardly seems a challenge to the ruling regime. Adherents follow the teachings of their master, Li Hongzhi, whose book, *China Falun Gong*—literally, "the law of the wheel-breathing exercises"—is said by his adherents to help cure sickness and rejuvenate the spirit. Depending on the depth of their conviction, followers practice the moves, study the philosophy, and learn the teachings by rote. The lessons of Master Li are based loosely on Buddhism and woven into a system of exercises and beliefs that together are designed to help Falun Gong followers reach enlightenment and, ultimately, find a place in heaven. Li preaches moral rectitude, forbidding smoking, drinking, or sexual relations out of wedlock.

But, if the pillars of Li's thought are traditional, the organization of his followers is thoroughly modern. Making expert use of both the Internet and the pagers carried by millions of Chinese, Falun Gong has built up a network of practitioners across the country who are regularly informed of Li's teachings, and who, as was shown in their first public action in April and in repeated protests since, can be easily mobilized for mass demonstrations. It is this organizational prowess that has China's leaders spooked. This summer, the government launched a major crackdown, arresting top leaders and harassing their followers. But the members of Falun Gong refuse to be cowed. Last month, small groups flouted the government's ban on practicing *qigong* in public, beginning their breathing exercises in the middle of Tiananmen Square even as public-security agents swooped down, kicking them and dragging them off by their hair.

China's government is only slightly more tolerant of Christianity. To be sure, the government no longer actively encourages the destruction of religious organizations. And even those who today attack the "new theism" differentiate between superstition and "normal religious activities" conducted in the course of observing one of the five officially recognized religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, and Protestantism. In practice, however, officials often see little difference between accepted religion and superstition. And those who worship outside the umbrella of state-sanctioned religions are ignored, marginalized, or actively repressed.

Thus Bishop Aloysius Jin, the current leader of the Shanghai Catholic community and a man who spent nearly 20 years in prison—several of them in solitary confinement—is





The New Earth Reader

The Best of *Terra Nova*
edited by David Rothenberg and Marta Ulvaeus

"Blends high adventure, bold philosophy, subtle humor, and remarkable irony all in the service of revealing the depths of human/nature relationships. Among these stories, essays, and interviews is some of the most creative writing about nature that you will ever encounter." — Mitchell Thomashow, author of *Ecological Identity*, Director of the Antioch New England Doctoral Program in Environmental Studies

208 pp., 37 illus. $24.95

now in paperback

A Stream of Windows

Unsettling Reflections on Trade, Immigration, and Democracy
Jagdish Bhagwati

"Anyone who reads this engaging description of the ways the world works will emerge a lot less confused and at least a little more optimistic." — Adrian Karatnycky, *Wall Street Journal*

Winner of the 1998 Eccles Prize for Excellence in Economic Writing
531 pp. $18.95 paper

Human Rights in Political Transitions

Gettysburg to Bosnia
edited by Carla Hesse and Robert Post

Arguments for transforming the human rights movement so that it can more effectively address new political realities.

Distributed for Zone Books
332 pp. $19 paper

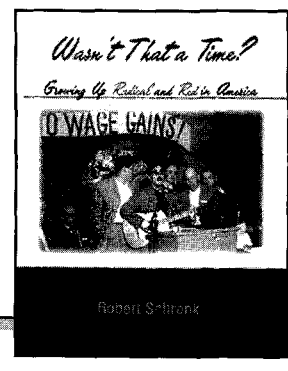
now in paperback

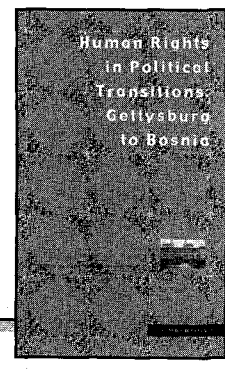
Wasn't That a Time?

Growing Up Radical and Red in America
Robert Schrank

"Schrank's recollections of life among the down and dirty vanguards is well documented and animated by steadfast personal commitment." — *Publishers Weekly*

472 pp. $17.95 paper





The MIT Press http://mitpress.mit.edu

To order call **800-356-0343** (US & Canada) or (617) 625-8569.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

careful to distinguish between religious tolerance, which is the current official policy, and religious freedom, which remains elusive. Joseph Kung, president of the Cardinal Kung Foundation, a U.S.-based group that campaigns for the freedom of "underground" Catholics, is even more emphatic. Kung points to the dozens of Catholic clerics detained in China as evidence that religious persecution still exists. "As long as they keep arresting bishops, as long as they keep harassing Catholics, that does not suggest the religious situation is improving," Kung says.

But it is hard for the government to quash religious sentiment in China when it does not really understand it. China's president, Jiang Zemin, gave voice to this frustration in his answer to a question on Tibetan religious freedom at a press conference with President Clinton last year: "[D]uring my visit to the United States last year, and also during my previous visits to other European countries, I found that, although education, science, and technology have developed to a very high level, and people are now enjoying modern civilization, still quite a number of them believe in Lamaism [the religion practiced in Tibet]. This is the question that I am still studying and still looking into. Why? Why?"

Jiang's "Why?" betrays his and his party's opinion of religion. For the advocates of "scientific atheism," religious belief is a symptom of ignorance and backwardness. Faith is a stage of retarded development. The government still seems to expect that economic progress will lift people out of their superstitious ways. They find it hard to understand why so many spiritual flowers bloom even as development delivers economic benefits and better education to the Chinese people.

Yet it is precisely this economic boom that has caused the rise in spiritualism. The boom is largely the result of Deng Xiaoping's conscious adoption of capitalist values in the 1980s. Deng called his new ideology "socialism with Chinese characteristics," but this policy fudge slowly ate away at the party's ideological core. Today, the structures of the revolution—the party and the state—are still in place, but the old ideology is hollow, and the sense of higher purpose has withered. Perhaps nothing illustrates this emptiness better than the cult of Mao Zedong, which has flourished during the '90s and today includes Mao shrines, Mao talismans swinging from the rearview mirrors of taxis, and lucky Mao statuettes that promise to bring good fortune. The cult remains, but, instead of a sign of party ideology, it has become a sign of ideological void. Mao thought has all but died, and Mao belief has become big business.

The renunciation of communism in all but name has left the Chinese people grappling for greater meaning. Devotees of the Communist dream have been stranded, while the younger generation is left to search for a moral agenda and a spiritual direction. Indeed, the project championed by Jiang in recent years to build a "spiritual civilization"—a hazy notion of civic morality—that would complement economic progress is as much an admission as any by the party that something is missing. And more and more Chinese have turned to religion to replace it.

It is not just materialism that fuels the new faith. Religion has also gained adherents among the many losers in China's quasi-capitalist economy. For, while the new system has created economic winners, it has widened the gap between rich and poor. The man who worked in the office next to mine as a translator and office manager for the Shanghai branch of a Western company earned ten times more than his brother, who did not perform as well in school and is now the manager of a production line at a state-owned shoe factory.

Then there are those who have no work at all. The unemployment rate in China is officially just over three percent, but by unofficial estimates it is well over 15 percent. And it is rising. Tens of millions of people in urban China are unemployed. And, arguably even more soul-sapping, tens of millions of other people are underemployed—locked into jobs with state-owned enterprises, with little to do, paltry pay, and no prospects of advancement. As the urban bourgeoisie in China swells in number and enjoys the benefits of economic reform—their own homes, in time their own cars, holidays abroad, nights out at bowling alleys—there are just as many who feel left behind. They too are seeking solace. And, because of the state's one-child policy, which has already spawned 70 million only children, many feel that isolation even more keenly.

Ge Jianxiong, a professor at Fudan University, suggests that many people are searching for something to believe in because, these days, they do not have the confidence to believe in themselves. Unwittingly echoing Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura, he says, "I am self-confident. I say what I think. But many people don't. They believe in religion because they do not have self-belief." Part of the reason for this, Ge argues, is a crisis of conversation that still lingers in contemporary China. Too many people are not comfortable talking to each other about the things that matter to them. What happens at home should not be discussed outside the home. What happens outside the home is often not understood by the people in the home. What is said in public should be couched for public consumption. The gulf between public discourse and private discourse remains wide. Ge recounts a saying that dates back to the Cultural Revolution, when conversation was often watched, and suggests that much of that mood still haunts China today: "With one person, you can speak your mind. With two people, use empty talk. With three people, best to joke."

Religion offers a connection to others, a feeling of belonging. That certainly seemed to be what appealed to my friend Moshe of Kaifeng. "You are Jewish," he said upon meeting me. "We had some visitors just last week from New York. Perhaps you know them?" And what about so-and-so from the community in Shanghai? Had I heard of what's-his-name who used to live in Beijing and has now moved back to Israel? Through his questions, his toasts, his slaps on the back, and his endless references to "we Jews," Moshe Xingwang Zhang was clearly delighting in what even he must have known was a tenuous bond. "We are something more than friends," he said, raising his glass to me that night at dinner. "We are relatives." ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why the Reform Party's best days are behind it.

Third Out

By SEAN WILENTZ

AMERICAN POLITICS ISN'T physics, but it has rules nonetheless. And one of the clearest has to do with third parties. Since the nation's founding, no third party has knocked off one of the reigning two, and none has taken power. (The Republican Party of the 1850s, sometimes cited as an exception, actually emerged as a major party after the Whig Party expired.) That's not to say third parties always fail; they just succeed in a different way. When third parties succeed, it's because they change the terms of debate. They take a cry from the margins of American life—an issue, or an interest, or a prejudice—and force it onto the agenda of the political elite. When the cry is powerful enough—for instance, Prohibition in the 1910s—the two parties adapt, and the political landscape alters. But then the messenger is no longer needed. And so ideological success presages political failure. As the great historian Richard Hofstadter put it in *The Age of Reform*, "Third parties are like bees: once they have stung, they die."

Has anyone mentioned this to America's pundits? To hear the chattering on the nation's cable stations, you'd think the Reform Party is taking off. Sure, everyone makes fun of Pat Buchanan and Donald Trump and Jesse Ventura, but they're getting almost as much press as George W. Bush, Al Gore, and Bill Bradley. And, behind the mockery, the underlying theme is clear: in 1992, Ross Perot's presidential candidacy was just one man's ego writ large; in 1996, it was just one man's ego writ smaller; but, in the 2000 election, America has a real third party. It has enticed a serious Republican presidential contender and elected a governor. It has wads of cash at its disposal. It has activists and counteractivists and flacks. Most important, it's becoming the repository of deep, hitherto unexpressed yearnings from the heartland. Never mind that these yearnings are contradictory; they're authentic and fresh—the stuff of which paradigm shifts are made.

It's an intriguing idea in what looks to be an otherwise boring campaign season. And it's nonsense. In fact, the Reform Party is proof positive of Hofstadter's theorem. Perot in 1992 was the movement's zenith. Coming out of nowhere and running a makeshift, largely self-financed presidential campaign, Perot won 19 percent of the popular vote—the largest total for any American third-party candidate since Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party campaign in 1912. And it wasn't because of his personality. Perot had a cause—deficit reduction—that perfectly symbolized what many recession-weary Americans felt: that government was irresponsible, arrogant, and beyond their control. Before Perot, the conventional wisdom held that deficit reduction was a dry-as-dust issue, capable of mobilizing only the nerdiest of wonks and goo-goos. After Perot's 19 percent, both major parties made deficit reduction their own. The Clinton administration famously chose Rubinomics over Reichonomics in 1993, and the Republicans in 1994 tried to do the administration one better. Upon winning Congress, they pledged that by a date certain they would not merely cut the deficit but end it. When Perot first proposed that idea, it seemed like political and fiscal lunacy. In two years it was on the mainstream policy agenda. In six years it was reality. That is how successful third parties work.

TODAY, BY CONTRAST, the Reform Party is all buzz and no sting. It survives because of a quirk in the campaign laws: the $12.6 million in federal matching funds waiting for its presidential nominee next year. It survives because the expansion—and dumbing down—of the broadcast media has blurred distinctions between the political mainstream and the political margin, turning the latter into a plausible simulacrum of the former. (Imagine what might have happened in 1912 if the schismatic Theodore Roosevelt or, for that matter, the socialist Eugene V. Debs could have schmoozed on camera with Larry King.) And it survives because it has become a Rorschach test. There are discontents in America, and discontented Americans of all stripes like to think of themselves as reformers.

But this does not add up to a political future. The Reform Party of 1999, unlike the Perot movement of 1992, does not have a compelling issue all its own. Its closest thing to an issue, campaign finance reform, has already been picked up by mainstream presidential contenders, in the time-honored American manner. In fact, none of its leaders has anywhere near as much credibility on the issue as does Republican John McCain.

What the Reform Party has is aging crusaders, each in desperate search of some political fountain of youth. The crusaders, notably the supporters of Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura, may be young compared to the electorate as a whole, but their ideas are old and spent. They have a history in American politics—a history of coming to nothing. The Reform Party is fast evolving into a museum of quixotic causes tricked out in the latest telegenic gear. The party is about to fail spectacularly not just in one sense but in two. It will not elect anyone president, and, more important, it will not change the way American government addresses the major issues of the day.

One year before the election, there are really three Reform

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Parties, led, respectively (from right to left), by Buchanan, Ventura, and the (comparatively) obscure New York-based radical Lenora Fulani. Buchanan has the backing of Perot's crony (and 1996 vice presidential running mate) Pat Choate; Buchanan has apparently also struck an alliance with Fulani. Ventura hopes to keep the party from falling to the extremists; along those lines, he's helping promote Trump's candidacy while leaving open the possibility that he might enter the ring himself, so to speak. Perot, down in Dallas, is said to be leaning toward Buchanan, but the Texan has been known to change his mind, and it's by no means clear that Perot still controls the contraption he built. Anything could happen. And, no matter what happens, the Reform candidate will represent an earlier, failed political sensibility.

BUCHANAN WOULD REPRESENT the biggest regression, at least in terms of chronology. Some of his dark apprehensions about the future are rooted in the deep, pre-American classical past. (The title, if not the content, of his new book, *A Republic, Not an Empire*, conveys much the same message as Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War*: that a government overextended by military adventures will collapse of its own weight.) Moving closer to the present, Buchanan lays claim to the highly diverse legacies of Henry Clay (as a high-tariff protectionist), John C. Calhoun (as a prudent, not imperial, expansionist), and Andrew Jackson (ditto). But, more than anything, Buchanan harkens back to the 1930s—and to a brand of nationalist pseudo-populism that, then as now, had a curious appeal at either end of the political spectrum.

At heart, Buchanan is a man of the old Catholic right—echoing the anti-New Deal catechism popularized by the "radio priest," Father Charles Coughlin, and the muscular, pietistic, corporatist anti-communism that found a hero in Generalissimo Francisco Franco during the Spanish Civil War. (To call Buchanan a Hitlerite, as some of his opponents have, is unfair; Francoist comes closer to the mark.) He detests the welfare state, which he sees as an intrusive secularist force. He regards the world beyond our shores as a tempest of savage tribalism, and he would like, on that account, both to halt immigration and to pull the United States out of the United Nations. He has a penchant for conspiratorial thinking, illustrated by his remarks about the devilish "foreign policy elites" and the pro-Israel "amen corner" that supposedly control our policies abroad and corrupt our politics at home.

The pundits who believe that Buchanan represents a genuinely new synthesis often say that his politics confound customary right-left distinctions. They point to his success among blue-collar Democrats and his ties to Teamster head James Hoffa Jr. But, if Buchanan's politics transcend right-left divisions, they transcend them in awfully familiar ways. The nostalgic view of America as a once-noble republic corrupted by special interests, the instinctive distrust of foreign involvements (and of foreigners), the economic nationalism that would enshrine nineteenth-century protectionism for all time—this has a long pedigree among supposed liberals and radicals as well as among conservatives and reactionaries. Sixty years ago, such ideas propelled the rise of the isolationist group America First, which Buchanan defends in his new book as a sort of forerunner of his own political insurgency. Although dominated, as Buchanan writes, by "small-government Republicans," America Firstism won over any number of leftish intellectuals, ranging from the aging historian Charles Beard (who later wrote obsessively that Franklin D. Roosevelt helped engineer Pearl Harbor) to younger authors-to-be such as Murray Kempton and Gore Vidal. No one should be surprised, then, that Buchanan has gained a respectful hearing in some pro-labor and erstwhile "anti-imperialist" circles, where his opposition to free trade and his polemics against the traitorous rich and the new world order outweigh his right-wing moralism.

Nor should anyone be surprised when Buchananism amounts to little or nothing. Isolationism, as commentators love to say, has a deep history in this country. But it is a history of failure. Isolationism has been a powerful force in twentieth-century America only once—after World War I, when phobias about entangling alliances defeated Woodrow Wilson's plans for American entrance into the League of Nations. America First dissolved for good on December 8, 1941, as soon as war became unavoidable. Some of its spirit lived on after 1945 in the Robert Taft conservative wing of the Republican Party, but it was quickly overwhelmed by the imperatives of the cold war.

The cold war, of course, is now over, which makes Buchananism possible. But 1999 is not 1919. World War II and the struggle with the Soviet Union have invested American internationalism with a moral dimension that it did not have in the aftermath of World War I. The cost-benefit argument for isolationism may retain wide appeal, but, early in this century, its defenders could claim that isolationism was also moral. In an America whose citizens remember Hitler, Stalin, and Milosevic, Buchanan has lost that argument before his campaign even starts.

BUCHANAN'S CROSSOVER APPEAL may explain his weird alliance with the pro-Fulani Reformers. Or it may be a marriage of convenience. But, either way, the alliance brings into play yet another familiar fringe—what might be called the psycho-left. Fulani first attracted public notice in the early '80s as a perennial candidate of the New Alliance Party, based in New York. The NAP was, in turn, the offspring of the Institute for Social Therapy and Research, one of a number of peculiar psychological sects that arose in upper Manhattan after the New Left's demise in the early '70s. Dedicated to the idea that political protest is itself a form of developmental liberation, the Social Therapy acolytes took the logical step, in 1979, of organizing themselves into a formal political party. Then, late in 1994, after years of getting nowhere with the electorate, Fulani and her supporters shut down the NAP—only to moderate their rhetoric and refocus their abundant energies and tactical know-how on capturing various pro-Perot grassroots organizations.

Behind the Fulanites lies a lush history of left-wing efforts to unite the class struggle with the liberation of the psyche. Frustrated dissenters of the late '40s and '50s climbed into

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wilhelm Reich's orgone boxes to overcome the repression of self and society. Campus New Leftists in the '60s fondled volumes of Herbert Marcuse and Frantz Fanon, charting the devious connections between capitalism, colonialism, and mass pathology. Poking around any well-stocked, reasonably hip bookshop in the early '70s, you were bound to find further variations on the theme in the manifestos of left-wing drug mavens and left-wing nudists and left-wing psychoanalysts. But only a hardy few kept the tradition alive through the Reagan-Bush era; Fulani was among the hardiest.

Tactically, Fulani's insurgency also represents the old, parasitic Marxist tradition of "boring from within"—camouflaging its actual political agenda behind anodyne talk of ending racism and democratizing the political system. Back in the '80s, for example, NAP partisans tried to confuse voters and potential donors by calling themselves members of the "Rainbow Alliance" and the "Rainbow Lobby," as if they were nothing more than Jesse Jacksonians. In their latest, even more moderate incarnation, the Fulanites have suppressed their socialism and posed as hard-nosed welfare reformers to fit in with the more conservative Perotistas. Yet none of these efforts shows any greater likelihood of success than the Communists' infiltration tactics of the 1920s or their mendacious, pro-New Deal posturing in the mid-'30s. Even in the Reform Party itself, which is considerably more tolerant of marginal agendas than is the electorate as a whole, the Fulanites are being exposed. At a recent party convention in Dearborn, Michigan, Perotistas dismissed them as Reds.

THE SIGHT OF Fulani joining forces with Buchanan is almost enough to make one sympathize with Ventura. The Minnesota governor does not truck in protectionist dogma, anti-immigration demagoguery, or left-wing psychobabble. More than that, he strikes many observers as a refreshing force in our national life—an anti-political politician, a down-to-earth man unafraid to call 'em the way he sees 'em. Yet Venturaism only seems new. It, too, has a history, and, like that of its Reform Party rivals, its history is not marked by success.

Nearly forgotten amid the hoopla over Ventura's rise to power is one of the chief reasons he won his election: the implementation of Election Day voter registration in Minnesota. To encourage the masses of stay-at-homes to exercise their civic duty, in 1973 Minnesotans enacted a law that permitted unregistered residents to sign up just before they cast their ballots. The reform, like the federal "motor voter" law linking driver's license registration with voting registration, was meant to amplify the voice of poorer and younger voters. And so it did—as swarms of Minnesotans (many young wrestling fans among them) showed up to vote for "the Body" instead of his staid, mainstream opponents. Ventura's improbable victory, in short, was an unintended consequence of his home state's high-minded progressive impulses.

Those impulses have a venerable history, especially across the nation's northern tier. Since the end of the last century, from the upper Midwest to the Pacific Northwest, all sorts of structural political reforms—including the ballot initiative, the recall, and the referendum—have flourished. If the technical aspects of the political system could be perfected, the reformers presumed, then the voice of the people would prevail, and good policy would reign. Ventura apparently agrees: His most audacious political effort since coming to office has been to try to abolish Minnesota's bicameral legislature and replace it with a single house.

Compared to the Buchanan-Fulani combine's machinations, Ventura's neo-Progressivism is encouraging. But it's hardly the vehicle for an independent political insurgency. Structural reforms may well benefit the political system, making it more efficient and responsible, as the turn-of-the-century Progressives hoped they would. But they can carry a political movement only so far. Eventually, the politics of clashing interests kick in, and the question of who gets what from whom overwhelms procedure. In other words, it's not enough to have beliefs about means. Eventually you must have beliefs about ends, as well.

Progressivism had mass appeal as a third party in 1912, when it combined good-government reforms with Theodore Roosevelt's "new nationalist" conception of a regulatory state that stood up to big business. Twelve years later, the Progressive Party revived under Wisconsin Senator Robert La Follette because of its strong labor support, winning 17 percent of the popular vote against Calvin Coolidge. Ventura, by contrast, lacks the compelling economic ideology that powered his Progressive predecessors. Insofar as he gets beyond structural reform, he seems to favor fiscal responsibility and social laissez-faire. Ten years ago that would have made him an unusual figure in American politics; today, however, he fits fairly easily into the New Democrat camp of Bill Clinton and Al Gore. So Ventura's Reform Party is caught. If it focuses only on process, it will be a distinctive force, but one without a compelling message. If it combines process reformism with social liberalism and pro-business moderation, it will be redundant.

THE REFORM PARTY will produce a lot of sound and fury over the coming twelve months. It will keep talk-show hosts in business, and it will cause the major parties headaches. A Buchanan candidacy, in particular, could sap the Republican nominee of support, which might prove decisive in a close race.

Furthermore, the two-party system is not invincible. There has been a steady decline in partisan loyalty over the past three decades. According to one recent poll, two-thirds of the electorate now favors the existence of a third party, more than double the figure of 30 years ago. Somewhere down the line, a new movement will almost certainly do again what Perot did early this decade: knock our political system for a loop.

But the Reform Party will not. The two major parties have absorbed its best issues. What remains is a strange reunion of lost causes, causes that historically have caught fire only in circumstances that neither America nor the Reform Party can replicate. After their auspicious debut in 1992, the Perotistas had reasons to feel heady; and there is still some lingering headiness surrounding the Reform Party. But that bee has stung. The buzz you hear is its death rattle. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

On the Town

A CHIEF TROUBLE with Martin Scorsese's new film is that it has to strain to be a Scorsese film. Certain graphic qualities have marked most of his work, and as with any director of personality and style, those qualities had become as natural to him as breathing. But in **Bringing Out the Dead** (Paramount-Touchstone), the formerly natural seems forced, redemptive, almost salvaging.

This sense of pumping, instead of flow, grows from the material he chose here and the people he chose to play it. *Bringing Out the Dead* is about the emergency medical service (EMS) in New York, the paramedics in the ambulances that respond to urgent calls for help. Joe Connelly's novel of the same name was adapted by Paul Schrader, himself a gifted director (*The Comfort of Strangers*, *Affliction*), who in 1976 wrote *Taxi Driver* for Scorsese. That earlier film had a lonely street-lamp texture that connects with this new film. But *Taxi Driver* enlightened us in some degree, took us into the beings of people who engaged us, if only in horror; very soon after this EMS story begins, we have a fair idea of where it's heading. There are few enlightenments of any kind.

Scorsese apparently understood this problem from the start. He knew that, in order to keep us interested, in order to distinguish his film from the TV hospital serials that are chockablock with emergency-room crises, he would have to lay on the Scorsese style, which TV could not approach: a kaleidoscope of ugly back streets and squirming, dingy lives, all captured in rapid-fire, hot-off-the-press editing—a frantic ballet of eternal night set to strident music. Those qualities are laid on here, but this time his style seems an attempt at recompense, even justification, for the familiarity and gawkiness of the material.

Nicolas Cage—of whom, alas, more later—plays the lead, a paramedic who is so ground down by the grimness of his work that he is nearly burned out. Responding to a call about a man's heart attack, he meets the man's daughter, played—another alas—by Patricia Arquette. Through the coursings of this attenuated film, built on the calls to which Cage responds in the three nights of the story, Cage and Arquette develop a sort of romance, not the usual boy-girl pursuit but the tumbling together of their lives, especially at the hospital, where she visits her unconscious father.

Cage's character is plunked on us early, largely through his voice-over descriptions of himself as a sort of ambulance-driving Hamlet. ("I'd always had nightmares, but now the ghosts didn't wait for me to sleep.") Arquette's character doesn't even have the limited benefit of a template. She is an ex- (but not quite ex-) druggie; there's a suggestion that she has been rather free in her sex life; she hates her father but now that he's in danger she is concerned, even though they've had rough times between them; so she's worn and tough but basically a good kid. Etcetera. All along, there are hints and additions about her, attempts to give her some sort of comprehensible being. But the ad hoc character-patching is hokey.

The defect is worsened by Arquette herself. To say that her talent is limited is to lavish praise on her. She doesn't act, she skims. Her superficiality is aggravated by her voice, which at latest count has three notes, none of them enticing. Cage at least has five or six notes, depending on how loud he has to be at the moment. Basically, his acting has two expressions: soulful melancholy, in which he suggests a bereft beagle, and screaming outbursts, which are always a welcome refuge for an inadequate actor. Every scene between Arquette and Cage—there are many—saps Scorsese's surrounding realism; and this drain on credibility turns his stylistic dazzle into first aid for the wounds that his actors inflict on the picture.

Admittedly, neither of these actors is helped by the dialogue. Connelly, the novelist, says that Schrader, the screenwriter, used most of the book's dialogue. I haven't read the novel, but if we take Connelly's word, then, on the evidence of the film, Schrader made a mistake. He should have rewritten. Much of Connelly's language in voice-over and dialogue sounds like the lyricism of 1930s metropolitan columnists. ("This city, it'll kill you if you're not strong enough.") The Styrofoam verbiage is yet another fakery that makes the cinematic realism look desperate.

The three different ambulance partners with whom Cage travels on the film's three nights are played acceptably by John Goodman, Ving Rhames, and Tom Sizemore. The last two characters seem like cases themselves, as if they ought to be patients, not paramedics. With Rhames driving, the speeding ambulance overturns. (No patient is aboard; Rhames and Cage are unhurt. It's just a romp.) Sizemore savagely beats up a drug addict and is last seen smashing the headlights of an ambulance. And Cage, on his own decision, commits a mercy killing. Connelly was himself a paramedic for ten years and presumably based his novel on observation. If so, the EMS that he depicts is one of the bigger threats to New York's health.

The best work by any of Scorsese's colleagues comes from the cinematographer and the editor. Robert Richardson, who shot several of Oliver Stone's finest, uses his camera to dig into shadows, to write emptiness across nighttime streets, to render the glare of neon avenues almost obscene. One of the visual themes in the picture is the face of a teenage girl whose life Cage did not save. Her face haunts him, and keeps recurring whenever Scorsese thinks the film needs a bit of metaphysical poignancy. Richardson gives this dubious device as much appeal as possible, including a scene in which (with digital assistance, no doubt) her face appears on several young women in one shot. The film editor was Thelma Schoonmaker, who has edited almost all of Scorsese's pictures, understands his nervous energy, and can translate it into rhythm and abutment. Elmer Bernstein wrote the score, which he studded with rock numbers that shake the picture, Bernstein hopes, into pungency.

Scorsese has sometimes worked outside the contemporary city, notably in *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *The Age of Innocence* and *Kundun*. The first of these was by far the best of the three, partially because (as Pasolini did in *The Gospel According To Saint Matthew*) he treated the subject in a modern key. In his two other off-beat films, he seemed to be confined, as if dressed in uncomfortable clothes, gifted surely but not quite at ease.

Let him be at ease, then, in underside and underworld films about New York; we'll be the beneficiaries. But let's hope that he won't choose future subjects just because they may afford him that ease. And let's hope that he'll be harder to please in his casting. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert Brustein on Theater

Culture Clashes

I HAVE JUST RETURNED from London, and if I can indulge an incorrigible penchant for generalization for a moment, I would suggest that England's formerly impregnable class system is beginning to show signs of shakiness. (One sign of growing social dislocation is the way the children of the upper class are starting to affect the accents of the poor; another is the general sullenness of a formally civil society.) These shifts are partly due, one suspects, to a general uneasiness about the European Union, partly to working-class resentment of the second-generation immigrants. Unlike the United States, where multiculturalism has entered the very fabric of our society, in England the mixture of races and the clash of cultures are stimulating considerable surliness and anxiety. As usual, the first place to come to terms with the new social conditions is the theater, where the classes and races mix freely in the blender that we call non-traditional casting.

An underlying theme in many of the plays I saw, both modern and classical, was conflict between the generations, which often issued into cultural conflict. Of the three new works on my schedule, one featured a struggle between the old and the young, the second a division between political revolutionaries and sexual revolutionaries, and the third a dispute between two theoretical physicists from warring countries. Stephen Poliakoff's **Remember This** at the Royal National Theatre's Lyttleton is an unmemorable play about memory, in which Poliakoff examines the impact of the media on moral decisions. The middle-aged hero has inadvertently discovered that the images created by video recorders are beginning to fade away, and with them our visual record of the past. He mistakenly assumes that withholding his announcement of this discovery until the proper moment will bring him fame and money. What stymies him in these ambitions is his son. The lad, abandoning his dissertation on George Gissing, betrays his father's trust by making the damaged videos material for installations in art galleries. *Remember This*, efficiently produced if rather indifferently performed, is a bit of a muddle as a play. What comes through more clearly is the author's sense of a breakdown in family and sexual relationships.

A far more interesting work about memory (and the same breakdowns) is Mark Ravenhill's **Some Explicit Polaroids** in an excellent production by the Royal Court (New Ambassadors Theatre). Previously represented by the sensationalistic *Shopping and Fucking*, Ravenhill has made a major leap with this play. Rather than exploiting the shock value of anal sex and fellatio, he is now using sexual adventurism as a way of taking the temperature of contemporary English society.

The play begins with the release of a political radical, imprisoned since 1984 for having made an attempt on the life of an English capitalist. To his chagrin, he finds that his old comrades and his new acquaintances have all abandoned political action for erotic experimentation and conspicuous consumption—in other words, for shopping and fucking. A former girlfriend has turned lesbian. A Russian expatriate he meets has become the love slave of an HIV-positive young man. The radical himself begins an affair with a highly wired female go-go dancer. But his attempt to find some niche in the new society collapses when the AIDS victim dies, and the rich man whom he had tried to kill is revealed to be still living comfortably with his outmoded liberal values, soothing his conscience with charitable contributions to human rights victims.

In this play, it is the Polaroid camera that is used to freeze the present-day images of a nation—including, in one striking scene, the ghost of the dead AIDS victim. In its obsessive homoeroticism and supernatural atmosphere, *Some Explicit Polaroids* bears some resemblance to Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*, and so does its blending of sex and politics. Max Stafford-Clark's taut production draws striking performances from its cast of six, especially Nick Dunning as the radical, Fritha Goodey as the go-go dancer, and Matthew Wait as the Russian, all of whom deftly explore the strife-torn no-man's land that exists between human ideals and human behavior.

Michael Frayn's **Copenhagen** (Duchess Theatre) is the play everyone urged me to see in London, and it certainly constitutes a gripping intellectual exercise. Staged in masterly fashion by Michael Blakemore, and acted with force and intelligence by its three-person cast, the play concerns a visit actually undertaken in 1941 by Werner Heisenberg (William Brand) to the Copenhagen home of his former teacher Niels Bohr (David Baron) and his wife (Corinna Marlowe).

Frayn speculates about the purpose of the visit from the perspectives of the three protagonists, in the fashion of Pirandello's *Right You Are* or Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, playing with the idea that Heisenberg consciously or unconsciously suppressed his knowledge that atomic fission could be used for destructive purposes. Whether a shrewd conniver or a blunderer, he nevertheless managed to prevent the Nazis from developing the bomb. Frayn also suggests that it was through Heisenberg's contacts with the German Embassy in Denmark that the half-Jewish Bohr and his wife were able to flee Denmark safely and join the other Allied physicists in Los Alamos.

Performed in a circular setting by Peter J. Davison that suggests a medical lecture hall (some members of the audience sit on stage like attentive students), *Copenhagen*, for all its intellectual integrity, never quite escapes its disquisitory form. And since the events are largely remembered, it does not always assume the immediacy of vital drama. Like Tom Stoppard, whose *Arcadia* this play most closely resembles, Frayn cannot quite penetrate the skin of discourse to expose the membrane of an inner life, despite his perfunctory efforts to turn the discussions of theoretical physics into a family drama starring Heisenberg as Bohr's rebellious son. The one moment that reached out to a more engaged organ than the brain was Heisenberg's account of his attempted escape from Germany after the war's end, fleeing through a terrain of waste and despair. But a play that explores the way Heisenberg's uncertainty theory exploded traditional causality ought to be exploring more unconventional theatrical forms.

AMONG THE THREE classical works I saw on this visit, one was a forgettable play elegantly executed, the second a famous farce forgettably executed, and the third a great tragedy unforgettably executed through bursts of fitful lightning.

Edward Bulwer-Lytton's **Money** (playing at the Royal National's Olivier The-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

atre) is a well-made play written in 1840 about the impact of inherited wealth on human behavior. This is Shavian territory, and *Money* would seem to predate Shaw's "Unpleasant Plays." But in place of Shaw's hardheaded warnings about sentimentalizing the poor (Shaw believed that poverty was a crime, not an ennobling condition), Bulwer-Lytton creates a Dickensian world where the poor people are virtuous precisely because they are penniless.

Essentially, *Money* is about a love affair whose consummation is blocked by misunderstanding. Clara refuses to marry Alfred not, as he thinks, because he lacks means, but because she fears that marrying a poor girl like herself will ruin his life. When he inherits a fortune and secretly transfers some of it to her, it is only a matter of time before she is able to confess her true feelings, and the two of them will be allowed to live happily ever after, their conjugal love underwritten by a substantial bank account.

The play trots along on Restoration epigrams ("What fools these young girls are—they take as much trouble to lose a husband as a poor widow does to find one") and melodramatic turns of plot. It is also peopled with an engaging group of fortune hunters, fops, and fashionmongers, superbly enacted by, among others, Denis Quilley, Simon Day, Patricia Hodge, and Roger Allam—plus appealing lovers in the persons of Simon Russell Beale and Victoria Hamilton. But despite a handsome production by John Caird, I left the theater wondering what purpose was served by oiling the joints of this arthritic play—other than reminding us of the financial complacency of post-Thatcher England.

The Royal Shakespeare Company is doing a minimalist production of **The Taming of the Shrew** at the Pit Theatre in that execrable spread of architectural blight called the Barbican Centre. In Lindsay Posner's conception, the Christopher Sly induction takes place in modern times, after this sodden drunkard has been awakened by a group of fox-hunting aristocrats. Persuaded that he is a lord himself, Sly is treated to a bubble bath, then left alone to play with a computer. On the Internet (digitally projected on a screen) he watches a performance of Shakespeare's play in costume.

That irrelevant conceit is about the only fresh idea in the production. Having exhausted the director's invention, the actors are soon forced to break through the screen onto the stage and perform the play, which proceeds to limp along largely due to a charmless Petruchio and a screeching Kate. Three hours in length with nary a laugh to be heard, this performance at least had the virtue of playing the ending the way Shakespeare wrote it, with Kate swearing allegiance to her husband rather than to her feminist sisters in the audience. The RSC program boasts that it is "the world's leading classical theatre company, setting standards everywhere we go and in everything we do." To support that vaunting claim, it needs to set much higher standards than those displayed in this sorry piece of theater.

The RSC certainly improved those standards with its new production of **King Lear** (Barbican). The quintessential tragedy of intergenerational warfare, this *Lear* also features something of a culture clash. The English company has been directed by the celebrated Noh artist Yukio Ninagawa, using an entirely Japanese design staff (sets, costumes, music, sound, movement, and fights).

The production makes a major miscalculation, however, in casting a Japanese film and stage actor, Hiroyuki Sanada, as the Fool. It's not just that Sanada has trouble with English—the Fool's riddles and witticisms all seem to have been translated from the original Sanskrit. It's that Sanada contributes such a relentlessly athletic performance—cartwheels, high jumps, pirouettes, somersaults, and so on—that he manages to inspire the same kind of hostility in the spectator as do mimes.

On the other hand, this *Lear* has the benefit of a great English actor, Nigel Hawthorne, in the leading role, not to mention outstanding performances by Michael Maloney as a good-hearted Edgar, John Carlisle as a tender Gloucester, Siân Tomas as a self-amused Goneril, and Christopher Benjamin as a sturdy Kent, among others. Hawthorne, who had already proved (in *The Madness of George III*) that he understood the nature of insanity, depicts Lear's growing mental breakdown in harrowing detail. What he doesn't achieve are the mountainous heights of the character. Hawthorne doesn't have the vocal strength (who does?) to make the defiant Lear compete with the fearful elements of wind and thunder. But if he doesn't provide enough of the terror in the part, he compensates with more than enough of its pity.

As a domestic story, *King Lear* is about two fathers who cannot properly distinguish between their good and bad children. With Lear, this is an internal failure of character, with Gloucester a failure created by external circumstances. The most powerful moments of the RSC production emerge when each of these fathers recognizes the depth of his error. In the subplot, it is when the blinded Gloucester asks for his disguised son's hand, and Edgar tentatively, delicately, lovingly reaches out to him. In the main plot, it comes more often, and with more wrenching affect—when Hawthorne's Lear acknowledges "I did her wrong," when he awakens from his deep sleep and rises from his pallet to recognize his weeping daughter, when at the last he bears her dead body onto the stage, bows low over the corpse, and delivers that unbearable series of "Never's."

That low bow is only one of the many Japanese elements in the production. The armor turns the men into a hybrid of medieval knights and Samurai warriors, and the gorgeous painted robes of the

Time Speeds, Said Louise, When a Fever Rises

A phantasmagorical twilight outlined the skyscape:
a braced structure of cases and frames.
You look tired, the other noted.

And the saying, of course, made it so.
She was now in high dudgeon. What she needed, she said,
was caprice and a cocktail shaker.

A slim satin dress sewn tighter than truth.
The danger of languid and *largo*, Ham said,
was that of an egg left leaning against a white wall.

He suggested the game where giraffe meant mischief
caused by absence of thought; octopus: deep end,
a downfall. Fan: flirtation; comb: a false friend.

A fork in the shadow of a cup denoted conclusion
was about to be reached. Of course, the practice was more
than the theory and some symbols doubled the odds:

acorn, for example, could be either instant success
or someone would soon burn a bridge.

Mary Jo Bang

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

courtiers place them in Imperial Japan. The open space of the set is backed by a massive wall, embossed with the traditional Noh element of a pine tree, which opens to create a deep expanse of space for entrances of court and army. The music, featuring traditional plucked Japanese instruments and wailing voices, turns the play at the end into a ghostly Noh drama, just as Kurosawa's *Ran* transformed *Lear* into a powerful Samaurai epic.

The high point of the physical production is unquestionably the storm scene. Ninagawa doesn't go in for deafening thunder sheets or computer-operated lightning flashes. Instead, he symbolizes the storm with two thin columns of sand falling from the flies, illuminated by pinpoint shafts of light, and then by dropping about fifty huge stones and boulders one after the other on the stage, as if these were the cracked moulds of nature, the split germanes that make ingrateful man.

The way this Asian production supports the acting of this Western company is sometimes jarring, sometimes puzzling, but never less than fascinating and startlingly beautiful. Some culture clashes resolve themselves in powerful and enduring art. ■

Jazz Lips

By ALBERT MURRAY

Louis Armstrong, in His Own Words: Selected Writings by Louis Armstrong edited with an introduction by Thomas Brothers

(Oxford University Press, 255 pp., $25)

I.

THERE CAME A time when Louis Armstrong decided that his importance as a musician and his status as a worldwide American entertainer were of such magnitude that he should produce his own documentation of his career. The first of those efforts was published in 1936, when Armstrong himself was not yet thirty-six years old. Its title was *Swing That Music*. No collaborator, editor, or ghostwriter was identified, not even when the book was re-issued fifty-five years later. Most of the personal information may well have come directly from Armstrong or was presumably approved by him, but not even the inscription in the book comes across as a credible approximation of either his voice on the page or his point of view. It runs as follows: "To the memory of the Original 'Dixieland Five,' to 'King' Oliver, to 'Bix' Beiderbecke and Eddie Lang, now gone, and those other pioneers of a quarter of a century past, known and unknown, who created and carried to the world a native American music, who created swing. And, finally, to the young musicians of today who will carry it on."

The grateful list of names is not intended to be comprehensive, of course; but given the restricted nature of social relations in New Orleans when Armstrong was growing up there, did he himself really think of the Original Dixieland Five as more decisive for his conception of music than Buddy Bolden, who came before King Oliver? And what about Mister Peter Davis, who as bandmaster at the Waifs Home turned Armstrong into a cornet player in the first place? And what about the decisive influence of the blues, and of ragtime piano players including Tony Jackson, and also of old Jelly Roll Morton, whose "King Porter Stomp" dates back to 1903? And what about the impact of Armstrong's parade and funeral-cortège "second line" apprenticeship upon his art, or his Mississippi riverboat experience as a member of Fate Marable's crackshot band on the Dixie Belle, which took him all the way up north for the first time?

Swing That Music covers the chronology of Armstrong's career up to 1936, and it includes just about all the highlights and the significant transitions up to that point, except his trouble with the gangster owners of Chicago and New York nightclubs and with his manager Johnny Collins in England. But the book reads more like it was written for Armstrong than by him, or even with him, except for occasional interviews and consultations. It certainly is hard to imagine him at one of those C-SPAN book events fielding questions about the career of the Original Dixieland Band. It is impossible to imagine him as the author of this representative passage: "They [Sidney Bechet on soprano sax and Ed Akins on trombone] actually got to London ahead of the Dixieland, which arrived about the end of 1917, and those boys took old London by storm. Nobody there had ever heard anything like it. Later on Bachet [*sic*] toured the Continent with Jim Europe's band."

ARMSTRONG'S SECOND BOOK-LENGTH autobiographical publication, *Satchmo: My Life in New Orleans*, appeared in 1954. It comes across as an "as told to" memoir, though once again no collaborator is listed. It obviously went through many revisings and polishings, but it comes closer to representing Armstrong's voice in its language as well as in its recollections and perceptions and attitudes. Of course, the accurate representation of one's voice on the page should not be confused with the verbatim transcription of one's voice in person or on the stage.

As any competent student of literary composition knows, the more natural and casual a voice sounds in print, the more likely it is to have been edited time and again. It is not a matter of making a record of things, memories, opinions, and notions as they come to mind. It is a matter of composition. Effective stream-of-consciousness narration is the product of verbal precision, not just of literal documentation. It is decidedly not a matter of unedited free-association. It requires as much unity, coherence, and emphasis as any other form of effective communication. As Count Basie made a point of telling his "as told to" collaborator (that is, myself) at the outset of the recorded interviews that were to be used as the raw-material basis for *Good Morning Blues*, the most likely effect that the publication of the literal transcriptions of his talk would create was the impression that he didn't know what he was talking about.

If it is properly done, the "as told to" autobiography represents how the subject wants his story told. To achieve this end, he enlists a competent and empathetic

ALBERT MURRAY is the author of *Stomping the Blues* (Da Capo) and *The Omni-Americans* (Da Capo). His correspondence with Ralph Ellison, *Trading Twelves: Exchanges of Letters About Literary Craft and American Identity*, will be published as a Modern Library Original in June.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

craftsman to make him sound as he thinks his voice should come across on the page; and unless he is completely illiterate, he must realize that producing a book is a matter of *writing*, not just talking and gesturing. You may imagine that the reader can hear your voice and see your gestures and share your memories, but the reader can do so only if they are all effectively rendered by the words as they are written.

Satchmo takes the Armstrong story only up to his arrival in Chicago in 1922 to join King Oliver's band, which was then playing at the Lincoln Gardens at Thirty-First Street and Cottage Grove Avenue. A sequel to *Satchmo*, much of which is said to have been a part of the original manuscript, was planned, but it is also said to have been suppressed by Joe Glaser, Armstrong's longtime manager, because it included numerous references to Armstrong's passion for marijuana, and his numerous questionable friends, and his troubles with unsavory or even criminal producers as well as law enforcement agencies. Glaser felt that such revelations would be extremely damaging to Armstrong's universally popular public image. After all, by 1950 he had come to be regarded as a worldwide American "ambassador of good will," a bona fide national treasure.

Armstrong is said to have continued to work on the manuscript for years; but no book-length drafts of it have turned up, in spite of claims by friends that he read parts of it to them from time to time. Now a new miscellany of selected writings has appeared, as *Louis Armstrong, in His Own Words*. It includes a 28-page selection labeled "The Armstrong Story," dated 1954, which recounts the years in Chicago, and it includes his marriage to his second wife, Lil Harding, a piano player, who also had become a member of King Oliver's band. There is also a short biographical summary labeled "The Goffin Notebooks," which was prepared sometime around 1944 for Robert Goffin, the Belgian jazz critic and historian who was writing *Horn of Plenty*, the first biography of Armstrong.

These notes begin with entries about Armstrong's life in New Orleans in 1918, and they include anecdotes about his first years in Chicago; his time in New York with the Fletcher Henderson orchestra; his return to Chicago and his stints with Lil's band, with Erskine Tate's Vendome Orchestra, and with Carroll Dickenson's Orchestra; his affair with Alpha Smith (she was to become his third wife); his return to New York, where he played at Connie's Inn and in Connie's Hot Chocolates musical on Broadway; and his trip out to California and Frank Sebastian's Cotton Club in Culver City. The text concludes with Armstrong's return to Chicago in 1931, and his troubles with criminal clubowners about bookings:

> Then this 'Guy said—"I am 'Frankie Foster." At 'first—I 'still didn't 'pay it any 'Attention—to 'that extent. 'Anyway—*Then* it 'dawned on me what he said—And I 'turned in 'Cold 'Sweats as I 'Back 'Cap'd—'Mugg'd—And took a 'double look'—As I said to him—"What you say your 'name wuz?:By this time he had his Big 'Pistol—Pulling it out—As he said—"My name is 'Frankie Foster." And he said he was sent over to my place (Show Boat) to see that I 'Catch the first train out to 'New York. I 'still try to make it appear that he ain't 'Frightening me.' I said—"New York? 'Why—that's 'News to me. Mr. Collins didn't tell me anything about it.'" Frankie Foster (a bad "sommitch") said, "Oh, yes'—'you're going to 'New York to work at 'Connie's Inn. And you're 'leaving 'tomorrow morning." Then He Flashed his Big ol' Pistol and 'Aimed it 'Straight at 'me. With my 'eyes as 'big as 'Saucers and 'frightened too I said—"*Well 'Maybe I 'Am 'going to* 'New York." "Ooh 'God." Then 'Frankie Foster said—"O.K. The 'Telephone 'Receiver is 'Down waiting for you to come and 'say you'll be there. Now—'you and 'me are going to the 'telephone booth and you'll 'talk." By this time—'Anything he 'ordered of me was 'alright—because it's no trouble at all for a 'Gangster to 'pull the 'Trigger—'especially when they have you 'Cornered and you 'Disobey them." "Soooo" we went to the 'phone (with a gun in my side) and sure enough, someone said hello, a familiar voice too—yes sir—I know that voice if I heard it a Hundred years from now. The first words he said to me was—"When are you gonna open here?" I turned and look 'direct into Frankie Foster's face—and said "Tomorrow AM."

Armstrong wrote by ear. He did not write as one was taught to write in grade school, by pencil, pen, and blackboard chalk. Somehow the idea or the anecdote that he has in mind comes across, but it reads more like a very rough first draft, rougher even than a hurriedly dashed-off letter of gossip or a postcard from foreign parts. His grammar and his punctuation are hit-and-miss when they are not just eccentric.

Now, one can often get away with playing music by ear when it is not being recorded, but writing is another matter; its mistakes are not forgotten because they are still there to confuse us. The fact is that old Gates did not make that typewriter sing like his horn. He did not write as masterfully as he sang or as he spoke, in his instantly and universally infectious jive talk.

II.

The new collection edited by Thomas Brothers includes also "The Satchmo Story," from early 1959, which Armstrong also labeled "The Satchmo Story Second Edition." (Perhaps he meant *Satchmo, Volume Two.*) Here Armstrong discusses the origins of his lifelong involvement with marijuana. He began to use the drug when he came back to Chicago from his first stay in New York. Armstrong regarded marijuana as a healthful herb that should not be classified as an illegal narcotic drug, and he continued to use it and to celebrate it, even though it got him into trouble with the authorities during a sensationally successful engagement in Culver City, "where I was blowing like mad at the Frank Sebastian's Cotton Club—upsetting all the movie stars... They would pack that great big fine place every night...."

> The first time that I smoked Marijuana (or) Gage as they so beautifully calls' it some time, was a couple of years after I had left Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra—playing at the Roseland in New York ... And returned to Chicago ... It was actually in Chicago when I first picked up my first stick of gage ... And I'm telling you, I had myself a Ball....The days when I first found out about gage—there weren't any law against it ... New York weren't 'up on it—when I first went there ... Of course 'I wasn't 'either at the time ... I probably wouldn't have paid any attention to it either ... But to me—I being a great observer of life, I happen to notice the white young musicians coming every night to this swell night club where I was playing—and although they had just finished their jobs, they still looked fresh—neat and very much contented ... And they would really enjoy my trumpet playing with the highest enthusiasm that any human being could do for another ... I just came up from the South, I was just thrilled with the closeness and warmth these great musicians, performers, etc....And they would praise me, which sounded to me like they were swinging a tune ... Beautiful... So it wasn't any problem when I went places with them ... After all this knowing each other and when they'd 'Light up, why—during the conversation, of whom ever be sitting around the room,—and at the same time—somebody or everybody would be 'blasting like Heavenly,'—out of a clear skies a *stick* of gage would touch the palm of my hand—or the tip of my finger...

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Armstrong names no names—not even Mezz Mezzrow, the Chicago saxophone and clarinet player who was his main supplier for years, not only in Chicago but also in New York, where, as Mezzrow wrote in his own as-told-to memoir *Really the Blues*, "Louis and I were running together all the time, and we togged so sharp we got to be known as the Esquires of Harlem." Mezzrow himself was eventually done in by hard drugs. His appreciation of Armstrong was worshipful, but it was also illuminating:

> Everyday, soon as I woke up about 4 in the P.M., I would jump up to Louis' apartment and most of the time catch him in the shower. That man really enjoyed his bath and shave. I would sit there watching him handle his razor, sliding it along with such rhythm and grace you could feel each individual hair being cut, and I'd think it was just like the way he fingered the valves of his horn, in fact, just like he did everything. When he slid his fingertips over the buttons, delicate as an embroiderer and still so masculine, the tones took wing as though they sprang from his fingers instead of his lips. They way he shaved put me in mind of the time Louis was blowing and I brushed up against him by accident, and god-damn if I didn't feel his whole body vibrating like one of those electric testing machines in the penny arcade that tell how many volts your frame can stand. Louis really blue with every dancing molecule in his body. He did everything like that, graceful and easy but still full of power and drive. He was a dynamo with a slight slouch.

Louis Armstrong by Jack Coughlin for The New Republic

About Mezzrow and music, Armstrong once remarked that "Mezz could explain every little iota of meaning in jazz, every little beat of the drum, riff of the piano, the changes in the blues and every little phrase he thought would benefit those Austin High School lads." (The latter were among his most enthusiastic fans and emulators in Chicago in the 1920s.)

Armstrong is said to have continued to smoke marijuana while serving out his suspended sentence in California, and he never stopped, recommending it to friends and admirers. Sometimes he provided it for members of his band for certain sessions. He thought it would improve their performance. "... First place it's a thousand times better than whisky... It's an Assistant—a friend a nice cheap drunk if you want to call it that..." He always took great exception to the charge that "gage" was as damaging or as dangerous as other substances upon which musicians used to rely: "Much different than a dope fiend... A dope addict, from what I noticed by watching a lot of different 'cats' whom I used to light up with but got so carried away they felt they could get a much bigger kick by jugging themselves in the ass with a needle—Heroin—Cocaine—etc—or some other ungodly shit... Which would not ever phase a man like myself, who've always had a sane mind from the day I was born..."

III.

In an article in the December 1951 issue of *Esquire*, also reprinted in Brothers's volume, Armstrong discusses certain selections from the epoch-making Hot Five and Hot Seven recording sessions in Chicago in 1926-1927, the recordings that announced Armstrong's preeminence as a definitive jazz innovator. In the arts, the actual avant-garde (as opposed to the theoretical one) always makes itself known by its real impact, its actual influence, rather than by declarations of intent and stirring, abstract manifestoes. When the Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings were issued, Armstrong, who never produced a manifesto in his life, became the very embodiment of the avant-garde artist.

The Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings amounted to a musical revolution. Armstrong's solos became the model for the jazz solo on all instruments; and the impact of these sessions on jazz arrangement and orchestration amounted to the beginnings of an American approach to the concerto, or showcase, for solo instruments. The Hot Five and Hot Seven combos existed only as recording studio groups; they never played for a live audience in a club, a dance hall, or a theater. Still, their output became the model for a truly indigenous American chamber music—the actual venue for American chamber music being the rent party and other parlor socials, the honky tonk, the juke joint, the neighborhood bar and grill, the gin mill, the cocktail lounge, the small nightclub, and the like.

In an "editor's note," *Esquire* provided an appropriate introduction to Armstrong's reflections: "Mr. Satchmo Louis Armstrong couldn't be expected to write about Jazz of the Twenties in the usual way simply because he is a very unusual personality. Herewith, recording by recording—eighteen of them— Satchmo tells his own jazz story as it really happened; the people, the places, the inspirations. As always, he says what he has to say with freshness, originality and meaning—the way he would say it on his horn." Of course, the whole piece also reads as if it was carefully and respectfully edited, as it should have been.

Armstrong talks about the pieces as the recordings are played for him, and his observations are not technical or academic. He does not offer musical theory;

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but what he says amounts to a natural history of the processes involved in the creation of these masterpieces. These sessions are not only a celebration of the improvisation that is an indispensable element of the New Orleans music that produced Armstrong; they are also an extension, an elaboration, and a refinement of it, as Armstrong goes beyond King Oliver, while giving him credit for setting the standards that he is still trying to reach.

The result, again, caused a revolution in American musical taste and musical practice comparable to the effect that the innovations of Picasso and Braque had on contemporary art, and that the poetry of Eliot and the prose of Hemingway had on contemporary literature. In the music of the Hot Fives and Hot Sevens, the "barbaric yawp" of Whitman's energetic pioneers acquires the syncopated elegance of the blues. It is not at all far-fetched to imagine that Emerson would have discerned in the extraordinary solos of Armstrong's omni-American trumpet, "melodies of the poet [that] ascend and leap and pierce into the deeps of infinite time." If only the great American transcendentalists had heard "Potato Head Blues"! And what could announce the arrival of the genuinely American more truthfully than "West End Blues"?

In his comments about the Hot Fives and the Hot Sevens in *Esquire*, the achievement that Armstrong is most happy to acknowledge is the fact that the pieces were played well, and are still a pleasure to hear. In these remarks he is not concerned with innovation, but with authenticity. What pleases him most about the Hot Fives and Hot Sevens is that the New Orleans musicians with whom he recorded in Chicago—Kid Ory, trombone; Johnny Dodds, clarinet and alto; Johnny St. Cyr, banjo; Zutty Singleton, drums; Baby Dodds, drums; and his wife Lil Harding who had worked with King Oliver's band—played together better than he had expected, and his expectations were always high.

FOR SOME REASON, the present volume does not include an autobiographical sequence about Armstrong's experiences in and around Storyville, the legendary red-light district in New Orleans, that was published in November 1947 in *True* magazine. The magazine observed about this little memoir that "although his manuscript contains many minor mistakes in grammar and punctuation, we, as editors, believe it contains some of the finest writing we have ever seen." It is indeed a highly effective sequence, which at its best reminds one of some of the old outrageous yarns that used to get spun and re-spun and challenged and topped and transfigured during those old fireside, bar room, and barbershop whisky-sipping sessions in lie-swapping. Here is a typical passage:

> Two of the biggest funerals I've ever seen in New Orleans were Clerk Wade and Henry Zeno ... Of course Clerk was killed by one of his whores when he was standing at the bar in ... and she came in to ask him to take her back and he shun'd her and he abused her lightly in front of the other Pimps... She stood back and pulled out a shiny pistol and emptied it into his body ... Clerk died right there on the spot ... The district was very sad about it for days an days ... The day 'Clerk was buried—I never saw so many girls crying over one man in my whole life ... All the pimps turned out also all the prostitutes—colored and white... Some of the Pimps were Pallbearers ... He was so famous until even the respectable people of the city—the churches were all sad over his death ... The woman who killed him pleaded guilty and told the judge she 'supported him and 'hustled for him and gave him every nickle she could rake and scrape... She was Aquited...

Armstrong's reminiscences here (and elsewhere) are no less a product of this old down-home practice—it is really a kind of aesthetic form—than are some of the poems of Langston Hughes or the fiction of Ralph Ellison. When Ellison finished *Invisible Man* he wrote to a friend and literary colleague at Tuskegee that his editor was "having a time deciding what kind of novel it is, and I can't help him. For me it's just a big fat ole Negro lie, meant to be told during cotton picking time over a water bucket full of corn [whisky], with the dipper passing back and forth at a good fast clip so that no one, not even the narrator himself, will realize how utterly preposterous the lie really is."

SUCH LIE-SWAPPING may best be delivered in a highly idiomatic rhetoric, including the crudest forms of dialect. In print, though, these mischievous narratives will not be enhanced by illiterate imprecision. After all, publishers hire editors to correct such rawness. Talking is one thing and writing is another, even when the subject is the same. In terms of sense and coherence, what is the average reader to make of the following?:

> I was still married to 'Lil Armstrong—she was also out in Califomia with me the whole time I was out there. Also the man she 'claimed she had him 'travel with her from New York everywhere she would go to '*Massage* her '*Hips*.-Keeping them from getting too 'large—'UMP—She sure must have thought I was a *Damn fool 'Sho Nuff*.' As if I didn't know her 'Hips are sure to '*Ignite*' from the 'Friction.'—Later on, I found out that this 'Guy' and 'Lil had been "Going together and 'he'd been 'Spending my 'money for years.
>
> So while I was out at the 'Cotton Club out in 'Culver City—'Alpha came out there too. The 'Lord Must have sent her out there to me.—As 'surprised as I were, that she came—I was 'Glad to see her also. 'Alpha said she 'love me so, she happen to be thinking 'strongly 'about me in 'Chicago. And after she had finished doing her 'Show out in 'Cicero Ill., which she was a chorus girl on 'Al Capone's Night Club—'Lucky Millender was the 'Producer. 'Alpha said she was so 'Blue from 'thinking about me, and 'missed me so "terribly much," that she 'Boarded a 'Train for 'California. And before she *knew* it—she wuz in 'California she gotten 'Scared—'lost her 'nerve—and thought that I'd get 'sore with her for 'coming 'way out there. But I was so 'glad to see her again, which I hadn't for 'months and 'months. I just couldn't help but say to her—"Now that you are 'out here you might as well 'stay and I'll find you a 'room"—which I 'did. So after 'Lil and her 'sweet 'Daddy return home from 'Califomia in my 'Car, I sent for 'Alpha to come back home in 'Chicago. Alpha's 'mother Mrs. 'Smith was still staying in that old 'Shabby Apartment at '33rd and 'Cottage Grove Avenue. So since I was back with 'Lil,' Alpha went back 'home and lived with her 'Mother.'—

ALAS, FOR ALL the attention that Armstrong himself called to his serious and on-going commitment to writing his own story, and to his constant use of the typewriter and the dictionary, both of which he took along on all of his travels, there is very little evidence in any of his published writings that he ever grasped, say, a junior high school-level of competence in the fundamentals of grammar, syntax, and meaning. Surely they are just as indispensable to the writing of even the simplest narratives as the rudimentary technical elements that he spent so much time practicing and mastering in order to play his music.

Armstrong had much to say over the years about musicians he admired and imitated, but the only mention of a writer that comes to mind is a somewhat questionable reference to Mark Twain in *Swing That Music*. And there is no impressive evidence in any of Armstrong's writing to suggest that Twain's prose moti-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

vated Armstrong to master the typewriter as King Oliver and other New Orleans jazz musicians had inspired him to master the cornet and the trumpet.

If only he had realized that right there in *Esquire*, along with all of those fly threads that all of the big-city sharp cats were checking out in the 1930s, was Hemingway, and that he was swinging a lot of American prose very much like Armstrong was swinging the blues and pop song choruses, and was trying to put other writers hip to how it was done. "Listen," Hemingway wrote in a dialogue entitled "Monologue to the Maestro" in *Esquire* in October 1935, "when you start to write you get all the kick and the reader gets none. So you might as well use a typewriter because it's much easier and you enjoy it that much more. After you learn to write, your whole object is to convey every sensation, sight, feeling, place and emotion to the reader. To do this you have to work over what you write. If you write with a pencil, you get three different sights at it to see if the reader is getting what you want him to. First, when you read it over; then when it is typed you get another chance to improve it. That is .333 which is a damn good average for a hitter. It also keeps it fluid longer so that you can better it easier."

THE IRRESISTIBLY ELEGANT good taste that is always there in Armstrong's music is mainly absent from his "writing." Surely nothing that ever came out of his horn was as embarrassingly corny as the oft-repeated phrases such as "red beans and ricely yours," "Pluto waterly yours" and "Swiss Crissly yours," with which he used to conclude his letters. In the language of music, Armstrong's mind was perfectly immune to banality and cliché. When he began featuring current popular songs and show tunes as a regular part of his repertory, his rendition of conventional lyrics had an influence on popular vocalists that was comparable to the influence that his trumpet stylizations had on jazz instrumentalists and arranger-composers. In the introduction to the original edition of *Swing That Music*, Rudy Vallee observed: "That Armstrong's delightful, delicious sense of distortion of lyrics has made its influence felt upon popular singers of our own day cannot be denied. Mr. Bing Crosby, the late Russ Columbo, Mildred Bailey, and many others, have adopted, probably unconsciously, the style of Louis Armstrong."

The painfully obvious shortcomings of Armstrong's writing take nothing away from his achievements as a musician, of course. Nor do the numerous instances of factual imprecision disqualify *Louis Armstrong, in His Own Words* as a useful historical document. The excellent notes and commentaries by Thomas Brothers, the author of *Chromatic Beauty in the Late Medieval Chanson*, provide a great scholarly service. While this collection of miscellaneous autobiographical pieces can hardly be said to add up to a significant literary achievement, the evocative effect of some of its narrative lines and its anecdotes is considerable.

Indeed, Armstrong's character sketches are instantly credible, and not without literary merit:

> I'll never forget the first time Soldier boy took me out to the Club, where I first heard that band play, I almost jumped out of my skin . . . The little slick headed drummer (with his hair—gassed to kill) and he kept it slick and shiny . . . A fly would have slipped and broken his neck immediately . . . And that's for sure . . . Konks were the thing in those days . . . I can remember that time when I joined 'Smack Henderson (Fletcher's pet name) I spent the whole day having my hair gassed—so I could make a big hit when I left Chicago to joint Fletcher Henderson's band.
>
> Speaking of Konkilines (hair do). As far back as I can remember,—this cute little drummer in Elkins 'band and Arthur Bryson, our once great dancer—were the only two guys whom I admired the way they kept their hair looking so pretty and so shiny all the times . . . [S]o you had to be real hipped and *be sharp—feel sharp—and stay sharp* . . . And that's just what this cute little drummer—playing in Elkins band did . . . His smile was infectious (I think—that expresses what I mean.) When this little 'Cat would be drummin smiling while twirling his drumsticks he never missed—he was perfect at it. Smiling with his chops stretching from ear to ear . . . I couldn't stand it . . . I just let out a yell and a scream . . . It was too much . . . Folks—that little drummer was Lionel Hampton . . .

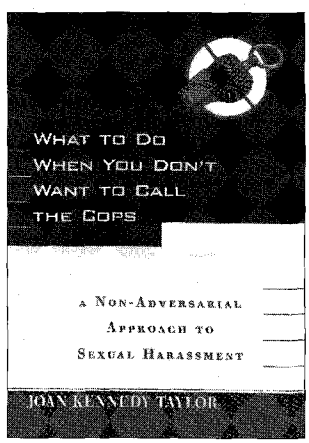
IV.

BROTHERS'S BOOK broaches also another aspect of Armstrong's life, and a far-reaching one. It begins with a section labeled "Louis Armstrong + the Jewish Family in New Orleans, L.A., the Year of 1907." This text was written by Louis Armstrong in his bed at Beth Israel Hospital in New York, on March 31, 1969. It is memoir of his experiences, at the age of seven, in 1907, with the Karnofskys in New Orleans, where Armstrong was born.

In this manuscript, Armstrong expresses his gratitude to one Dr. Gary Zucker, whose treatment pulled him

"DEMONSTRATES THAT FREE SPEECH AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT ARE MUTUALLY REINFORCING IN THE WORKPLACE."

—NADINE STROSSEN



"Calling the cops"— that is, relying on legal or corporate authorities to protect women from offense in the workplace—isn't doing a good job. Women can do better at protecting themselves than authorities can, if women know what to expect in the changing workplace and learn to speak up for themselves. This book by a feminist and First Amendment advocate has a positive message for managers, workers, and everyone concerned with our changing culture.

What to Do When You Don't Want to Call the Cops: A Non-Adversarial Approach to Sexual Harassment
by Joan Kennedy Taylor
Available at fine bookstores. 224 pp./$24.95 cloth
Published by New York University Press

www.cato.org CATO INSTITUTE 1-800-767-1241

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

twice through intensive care. The expert and tender ministrations that he received at Beth Israel put him in mind of the warm, caring relationship that he had enjoyed with the Karnofsky family, for whom he worked when he was a boy. Hearing Dr. Zucker singing "Russian Lullaby," he writes: "This is the song that I sang when I was seven years old—with the *Karnofsky family* when I was working with them, every night at their house when Mother Karnofsky would rock the Baby David to sleep. Then I would go home—across the track, cross town to *May-Ann* and *Mama Lucy* my mother and sister." And a few paragraphs later, he goes on to say:

> I had a long time admiration for the Jewish People. Especially with their long time of courage, taking So Much Abuse for so long. I was only *Seven* years old but I could easily see all the *ungodly treatment* that the White Folks were handing the poor *Jewish* family whom I worked for.... Even '*my race*,' the Negroes, the way I saw it, they were having a little *better* Break than the *Jewish* people, with jobs a plenty around. Of course, we can understand all the situations and handicaps that was going on, but to me we were better off than the Jewish people. But we didn't do anything about it. We were lazy and *still are*.

And he adds that "we never did try to get together and show younger Negroes such as myself to try and event o show that he has ambitions and just a little encouragement—I could have done something worthwhile. But *instead* we did nothing but let the young *up*starts know that they were young and simple, and that was that."

THIS FLATLY CONTRADICTS what he wrote in *Satchmo, My Life in New Orleans* about Mister Peter Davis, the bandmaster at the Colored Waifs Home for Boys, who made him a cornet player as well as a student bandleader. "The first day we paraded through my old neighborhood," Armstrong there recalled, "everybody was gathered on the sidewalk to see us pass.

> All the whores, pimps, gamblers, theives and beggars were waiting for the band because they knew that Dipper, Mayann's son, would be in it. But they never dreamed that I would be playing the cornet, blowing as good as I did. They ran right up to Mama, who was sleeping after a night job, so she could see me go by. Then they asked Mr. Davis if they could give me some money. He nodded his head with approval, not thinking the money would amount to very much. But he didn't know that sporting crowd. Those sports gave me so much I had to borrow the hats of several of the boys to hold it all, I took in enough to buy new instruments for everybody who played in the band."

It is curious that there is no mention of the Karnofsky family during the Waifs Home period.

Armstrong's late celebration of his relationship with the Karnofsky family is very affecting. And I must add that it is not a very unusual or surprising story about southern Jewish Americans and their black employees. I recall that in Mobile, Alabama in the 1920s and '30s, one had schoolmates whose Jewish employers encouraged them, and even insisted that they go to high school, and also continued to employ them during the summer breaks if they went on to college; and some of those fine people were said to patronize their former employees who became doctors and dentists.

MANY OF ARMSTRONG'S outbursts are overly sentimental, obsequious, ill-tempered, wrong-headed, and glibly misinformed. Still, not unlike the soliloquies in a play, they serve the indispensable biographical function of complicating the protagonist's character, by providing concrete evidence in his own words that this man, whose charm was legendary, and whose lifelong motto was "I'm always there in the cause of happiness," also had his hang-ups.

The editor rightly does not allow this dimension of Armstrong's complexity to go unremarked. In his introduction to the book's first section, Brothers notes that that "there are references to '*over Educated fools*' who condemn the '*White* Folks *Nigger*.' To them, Armstrong sharply retorts: 'Believe it—the White Folks did *everything that's decent* for *me*. I wish that I can *boast* these *same* words for "Niggers. I think that I have always done *great* things about uplifting my *race* (the Negroes, *of course*) but I *wasn't appreciated*.'" About this, Brothers wisely comments: "The document may be read, in part, as a commentary on the change in audience that sectionalizes Armstrong's long career: During his apprenticeship in New Orleans and during the first great peak of his career, in the 1920s in Chicago, he played almost exclusively for blacks; the last decades of his career found him playing almost exclusively for whites, while many African Americans resented the cultural role in which he seemed to thrive."

In any case, how could Armstrong ever forget how obvious and how enduring was his influence on those education-oriented Negroes who went to high school and college in the 1930s? They not only studied and memorized his music, they also admired and emulated his personal deportment (the neatness symbolized by his clean white handkerchiefs, for example) and the elegance of his up-to-date but unfaddish tailor-made wardrobe. They may have rated Duke Ellington's diction as classier, but Ole Louie's was the jive talk you had to be able to lay on them if you wanted to be a hip man about town, a cat whose life was geared to swinging. (And if you weren't, no use licking your chops!)

When the musicians of that generation came into prominence, moreover, the overwhelming majority of them always acknowledged their indebtedness to him. And when he clowned before predominantly white audiences as he never did before black audiences, they didn't go around ridiculing him. Some may have shaken their heads or rolled their eyes in bewilderment and exasperation—as Ralph Ellison, whose admiration of Armstrong's musical tone and inventiveness was second to none, used to say, "Man, sometimes ole Louie shows his ass instead of his genius"— but they always referred to him, and always addressed him, as Pops. And so do their children and grandchildren.

STILL, IN SHARP contrast to the ease with which he seemed to combine the role of musical genius and court jester and minstrel clown, and refer to himself as Satchel Mouth, Satchmo, Satch, Dipper Mouth, Dipper, Dip, Mo Mouth and Gate Mouth, Armstrong did not take kindly to condescension. Not even Lucille, his fourth and (according to him) his most wonderful wife, could get away with rubbing him the wrong way, status-wise. "By, Sweets having that baby for me," he wrote, uncharmingly, to Joe Glaser on August 2, 1953, "gave Lucille the best ass whipping of her life. As nice + sweet + as wonderful as she is she still has a sense of '*Airs*' that I've never particularly cared for—Being raised around people who were, just plain human beings, and loved (at least) respect for each other. And not the Attitude that you're just a musician or low trumpet player, Smokes, Reefers, etc. That I'm more than you type, which is all *Bullsh-t*. Which Goes to show, that I Can tolerate Anything, as long as it doesn't interfere with my trumpet."

The primary emphasis in *Louis Armstrong, in His Own Words*, is where it should be, on the wonderful fact that nothing was ever more important to Armstrong than blowing that horn. Certainly

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not the accumulation of great wealth, and not fame either, which he feared would restrict his freedom to be himself and to spend his spare time doing what he wanted to do, which was hanging out with friends wherever he happened to be, making the rounds, dropping in on neighborhood bars, night spots, informal parties, sitting in with bands and joining jam sessions whenever he was moved, requested, or simply welcome to do so.

> . . . you see; I've always been a happy go lucky type of sort of fellow in this way—I never tried in no way to ever be *real real* filthy rich like some people do and after they do they die just the same.—
>
> But Mary-Ann had already 'hipped to what was happening in this healthful wide beautiful world. . . So, by me doing that (even before I heard of gage) I was always the happiest young trumpet player that anyone ever wanted to meet . . . From this first time I picked up my trumpet, or the one that was out to the Orphanage, I was a popular youngster. . . Success has always been—mine. . .

THE WIDE RANGE of autobiographical documentation that Brothers has included in his volume makes it a very significant source for the study of Louis Armstrong. Meanwhile, for those in search of an Armstrong memoir that transcends the obvious limitations of the provincial-idiomatic yet retains the flavor of his extraordinary voice, there remains "Louis Armstrong, A Self-Portrait," the interview with Richard Meryman that was published as the cover story in *Life* in April 1966 and slightly expanded and republished as a small and handsome volume (with illustrations) by the Eakins Press in New York. It is still unsurpassed. Meryman asked expertly crafted questions, and then shaped Armstrong's various answers into a fine, uninterrupted narrative. In the Armstrong centennial that is upon us, surely Armstrong's only successful exercise in as-told-to autobiography should be made available again.

If getting the voice on the page is the objective, consider the Armstrong-Meryman vamp:

> I'm always wondering if it would have been best in my life if I'd stayed like I was in New Orleans, having a ball. I was very much contented just to be around and play with the old timers. And the money I made—I lived off of it. I wonder if I would have enjoyed that better than all this big mucky-muck traveling all over the world—which is nice, meeting all those people, being high on the horse, all grandioso. All this life I have now—I didn't suggest it. I would say it was all wished on me. Over the years you find you can't stay no longer where you are, you must go on a little higher now—and that's the way it all came about. I couldn't get away from what's happened to me.

And here is the outchorus:

> I've had some great ovations in my time. When people do that they must feel *something* within themselves. I mean you don't go around waking people up to the effect of saying, "You know, this music is art." But, it's got to be art because the world has recognized our music from New Orleans, else it would have been dead today. But I always let the other fellow talk about art. 'Cause when we was doing it, we was just glad to be working up on that stage. So for me to be still on earth to hear that word, sounds pretty good. I'm just grateful for every little iota.
>
> Some cats wants pats on the back, and they wants you to kneel down 'cause they did this and did that and they are so and so. But I still feel I'm just an ordinary human being trying to enjoy the work I live. It's something to know you still can make that call when the man say, 'All on.' That's enough wonderment for me . . . ."

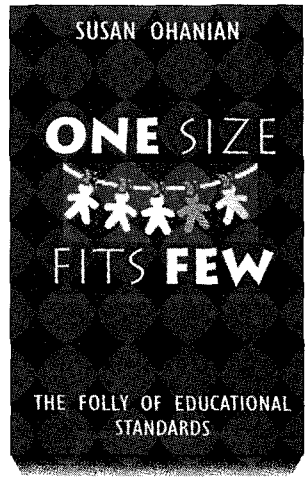
And not for him only. ■

Susan Ohanian takes no prisoners.

ONE SIZE FITS FEW

THE FOLLY OF EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Susan Ohanian



One Size Fits Few is a sharp, pointed pin with which to deflate the overblown Standards movement in education. In her hilarious, unsparing, and often touching narrative, Susan Ohanian—a teacher, author, and frequent contributor to the *Atlantic, Education Week,* and other publications—recounts her quest to make sense of the Standards movement.

"Making sense" is no small feat, as we see when Ohanian muses on school districts withholding diplomas from students who fail to demonstrate "necessary knowledge" of topics such as covalent bonds, the Edict of Nantes, La Cucaracha, and the Slough of Despond.

Balance is even more elusive in the media, as is evident when Ohanian drafts an op-ed piece on Goals 2000 for *USA Today.* When her editor repeatedly finds the real-life students she portrays "too unique," too urban, too nonstandard, she realizes that all he wants to know is "how the kids in Grosse Pointe measure up against the kids in Larchmont or Palo Alto, and how both compare to the Japanese."

Underlying the irony is a call to action. "It is my moral duty to offer a counterargument to people who would try to streamline, sanitize, and standardize education" says Ohanian.

We're lucky to have someone like Susan Ohanian who is willing to take on all the pious nonsense about Standards.

—Alfie Kohn

0-325-00158-8 / 1999 / 154pp / Paper / $16.00

Heinemann

Receive a **10% Discount** when you order online:
www.heinemann.com

To order your copy, **call 800-793-2154, fax 800-847-0938,** or write:
Heinemann, 88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

E Pluribus Sepia

By CHRISTINE STANSELL

Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony A film by Ken Burns and Paul Barnes

(PBS)

Not for Ourselves Alone: The Story of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony by Geoffrey C. Ward and Ken Burns

(Alfred A. Knopf, 240 pp., $35)

TRANSLATING HISTORY INTO television—even into responsible television, as in Ken Burns's documentaries—is inevitably a matter of shrinking and domesticating it. Something very large—a long span of time, an event of magnitude, a person of importance—is cut down to the scale of our leisure time, to fit comfortably into an hour or two at the end of an addling day. Television is not well-suited for the vast, the complicated, and the unruly. Even at its most serious, it never unburdens itself of the duty to entertain.

The question that eventually vexes the serious reader of history—why care about these dead people, after all?—never really troubles the viewer of history on television. For the viewer does not have to care very deeply for very long, and is never really discomfited. Instead he or she enjoys the satisfaction that lies in the instant accessibility of what is remote in time—and the easy translation through which distant actors come to seem almost neighborly. Watching history on television, we become heirs to the great American tradition of edification as pleasure, followers of the Chatauqua circuit of public television.

Ken Burns has pushed the form further than anyone else, with appealing results. *The Civil War*, which appeared in 1990, took a huge subject of daunting complexity and whittled it down to a series of episodes that attracted many thousands of viewers. A gifted storyteller, Burns managed to create a lucid narrative of the military conduct of an immensely complex war. But he also went beyond the conventional stuff of battles and troop movements to evoke intimate personal experiences of the war among a wide range of participants, the anonymous as well as the famous. Slaves and slaveowners, Unionists and rebels: all became valiant and credible protagonists.

In the end, however, the substance of the Civil War dissolved in a mist of elegy. Everyone seemed so well-meaning; it was hard to remember exactly why these wonderful people were killing each other. Burns domesticated history, keeping at bay the belligerent facts of a hard quarrel about American justice and the nature of evil. Now Burns has tried his hand at another big nineteenth-century subject, the women's rights movement and the friendship of its leaders Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Again, he has produced a lovely tableau of inner experience intermingled with great events. And again, the obdurate nature of the history—everything about these truculent women and their truculent ideas, everything that aroused so much fury and so much passion—has faded into the autumnal tones of a past that will give trouble to nobody.

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony were unquestionably the most important American female political leaders of the nineteenth century. Their friendship was a magnificent collaboration, an immensely productive and serviceable relationship that established the intellectual and political agenda for what became the most advanced, prescient, and radical women's movement in the world.

Anthony was the less showy of the pair, but an incomparable organizer; and she was one of the most successful of the great generation of anti-slavery activists at making a transition from youthful idealism to an activist post-war role outside an increasingly corrupt Republican Party. Stanton became one of the most dazzling intellectuals of the late nineteenth century, an intrepid and brilliant investigator of that realm of social life—marriage and the family—designated as women's particular province and, ultimately, a great elucidator of the psychological conditions of human liberty.

THEY WERE VERY different women. Stanton was a daughter of affluence and privilege, descended on her mother's side from the eminent Livingston clan of New York State; her father was a distinguished judge. Anthony was from a modest Massachusetts Quaker family of erratic fortunes. Given, in the Quaker manner, one of the better educations for girls available, she worked hard as a girl and even harder as a young woman, when the failure of her father's factory plunged the family into debt and eventually sent her out into the world to earn a living as a schoolteacher.

They met in upstate New York in 1851, three years after the young Mrs. Stanton emerged as a leader at the famous Seneca Falls Convention for Women's Rights. The affinity was immediate. The substance of the match was not shared matters of love or children or domesticity. What they shared, instead, was the great burning question of the rights of women: a cause that each had enfolded into her heart.

Anthony was the organizer, Stanton the thinker; but this dichotomy tells only a part of the story. Each needed the other for what we would call her self-realization. Anthony would have remained a maid-of-all-work for whatever reform movement was lucky enough to enlist her. Stanton would have become an aggrieved housewife, a fulminating writer of letters to the local editor, a hostess who argued with parlor guests a little too strenuously. Anthony, who never married, was lonely to the core and remained so for much of her life; but trained as she was from childhood to pour herself into serving others, she alleviated her solitude by turning to a larger cause and personalizing it in her friend. Stanton was mired in domesticity, with many children and a husband who was forever absent; and in Anthony she found a companion to ratify her sense of

Christine Stansell is Professor of History at Princeton. Her new book, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century*, will be published by Metropolitan Books in the spring.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mission and to help propel her ideas into the world of political reform.

They never spoke of love, or described their connection in the sentimentalist idiom that their female friends employed. Yet their language plumbed considerable emotional depths, the spirit's yearnings expressed through recourse to shared endeavor. "Sometimes, Susan, I struggle in deep waters," Stanton wrote memorably after an appearance before the New York state legislature in 1854, when friends and family, including her husband and her father, reproached her for holding unwomanly opinions. "To think that all in me of which my father would have felt a proper pride had I been a man is deeply mortifying to him because I am a woman."

Anthony instinctively gave Stanton the gift of "a proper pride." She spent long periods at the Stanton home, helping with the housework and the babies so that Stanton could write. Then she took the results to the world. "Through all these years," Stanton explained toward the end of her life, "Miss Anthony was the connecting link between me and the outer world—the reform scout who went to see what was going on in the enemy's camp and returned with maps and observations to plan the mode of attack."

In the 1850s, both women lived in the thick of the struggle against slavery. Upstate New York was a haven of radical sentiment, and friends and family were leading actors in the agitation. Stanton's husband Henry was a stalwart of the anti-slavery Free Soil Party, and her cousin Gerrit Smith was one of the Secret Seven who financed John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. Anthony was from a less eminent but equally committed family: toting up her household tasks in her journal one evening, she noted she had gone to church, quilted, and fitted out a fugitive slave whom Harriet Tubman had dropped off.

It was one of those rare moments when people are able to hold more than a single political idea in their heads at the same time. So amid the fervor of abolition, Anthony and Stanton also kept alive the energies unloosed at Seneca Falls. They successfully nursed into being a loose consortium of women's rights sympathizers. When the war came, they rejoiced. They believed that the recognition of citizenship as a birthright, long denied to black people, would necessarily entail universal suffrage, and thus votes for women.

And so the Fourteenth Amendment, which enfranchised only black men, came as a shock to them, and a betrayal. Beloved friends and supporters, male and female, deserted them on the grounds that the Northern public would reject too much change at once. "'One question at a time,'" Wendell Phillips, a close friend, admonished them. "This is the negro's hour." Stanton and Anthony were outraged by the abandonment of the principle of universal adult citizenship. "The struggle of the last thirty years has not been merely on the black man as such, but on the broader ground of his humanity," maintained Stanton. Stanton's upper-class hauteur, which had been checked by her abolitionist milieu, rose to the surface in a racist rage that well-born, educated "Saxon" women should stand aside for "ignorant" Negroes and foreigners.

COURTESY ALFRED A. KNOPF

Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, circa 1869.

Disgusted, they broke ranks. The women's movement divided into a New York-based organization led by Stanton and Anthony and a Boston association composed of those who supported the Fourteenth Amendment. Stanton's and Anthony's repudiation of their abolitionist legacy carried a high price: over the next thirty years, they were at best indifferent and at worst blind to the possibilities of joining their cause with the cause of disenfranchised black women.

With the field cleared of old comrades, however, there were also benefits. They looked to themselves, not to old friends or to old strategies, and their work took off. They reached new women outside the ranks of the abolitionist faithful. They published a newspaper, *The Revolution*, which exposed cases of what we now would call sexual harassment, and celebrated women's achievements (a new postmistress where there had never been one before!), and discussed discrimination against women workers.

And they barnstormed the country. Indefatigable and stoic travelers, Anthony spent months on the road until well into her eighties, and Stanton hit the Lyceum circuit in late middle age. They routinely travelled through the trans-Mississippi West and even to the Pacific coast in an age when railroad links in the West were just being completed, trains took days between stations, cars were badly heated, and bridges collapsed. Together and apart, Stanton and Anthony campaigned for votes for women. While the Boston organization concentrated on a state-by-state strategy of enfranchisement, the New Yorkers believed that only a constitutional amendment could bring victory. In 1878, they brought a newly worded suffrage amendment to Congress. The text would be reintroduced every year for the next forty-two sessions.

But they also drifted apart in crucial ways. Stanton, ever sociable but always happier to be addressing others than to be conspiring with them, tired of catering to realpolitik in a quiescent, conservative era. She retreated to the life of the mind,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

where the space inside her own head was as limitless as the country itself had seemed in the 1850s. She flirted with free thought, free love, and socialism; her writings and her speeches about the inequities for women embedded in marriage slashed through platitudes and pieties. She was fascinated with the big progressive experiments in social planning in England and the Continent in the 1880s and 1890s, which she encountered when she visited a daughter who had married and moved to Europe. "I grow more radical as I act older, while Susan seems to grow more conservative," Stanton observed placidly.

In the 1890s, her eyesight failing, her plump body turned corpulent and immobile, Stanton pressed on into a more philosophical, contemplative realm. "The Solitude of Self," the crowning speech of her lifetime delivered to the suffragists in 1892, reached in a most un-Victorian way toward a sage contemplation of the "immeasurable solitude" of human existence and the urgent need for social training—political, educational, psychological—to equip each soul, male or female, for the awesome burden. In this great speech, sexual inequality is no longer simply a matter of earthly injustice but an intolerable encumbrance to spiritual self-sovereignty.

> Whatever the theories may be of woman's dependence on man, in the supreme moments of her life, he cannot bear her burdens. Alone she goes to the gates of death .... and if her sorrow is greater than she can bear, alone she passes beyond the gates into the vast unknown.

Anthony saw herself not as more conservative, but as more practical. The vote became her passion, and she was willing to drop all the other issues that she and Stanton had pressed on women in order to unite a diverse constituency around this single goal. Once the two suffrage organizations were reunited in 1890, she gathered in great flocks of civic-minded matrons from many different pastures: the ladies' auxiliary to the Knights of Labor, the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the National Association of Colored Women.

The irony was that suffragists conducted their crusade for enfranchisement of "one-half the population" at the moment when large chunks of the male electorate—African Americans above all, but immigrants, too, and working people—were denied their right to vote. Anthony, burning with desire for the brass ring, did not look aside. Despite black clubwomen's intense interest in suffrage work, she tacitly supported their exclusion from the association lest she offend her numerous white Southern delegates and lose Southern supporters in Congress.

This kind of organization was not hospitable to Stanton. Anthony's cadre of helpers, her "nieces," thought that Stanton was a wild woman, out of control with her views on liberalizing divorce, her incessant criticisms of marriage as an institution of male dominance, and her insistence that women's freedom lay in rigorous individualism, and not in enhancing their power as mothers and wives. Stanton, who did not suffer fools or conservatives gladly, cared little about the criticism. She continued to see her task as "rousing women to thought," not smoothing over differences.

When she, along with a few free-thinking female friends, published *The Woman's Bible* in 1895, a feminist critique of Scripture based on historicist biblical criticism, Anthony's lady-like Protestant troops were appalled. Despite Anthony's plea, the organization voted to condemn Stanton. And once the main body of the woman's movement repudiated her, Stanton began a long slide into historical oblivion. Stanton opted for lofty philosophy in the bitter *Woman's Bible* affair, quoting Emerson that "it is better to be a thorn in the side of your friend than his echo." Anthony became the preeminent representative of women's suffrage, the embodiment of nineteenth century woman's rights to her contemporaries and its symbol for us now.

Even then, the friendship did not fail. A remarkably efficient mechanism of discord and rapprochement was embedded in the relation. Stanton's daughter observed its operations when she watched the two at work in 1876 on their monumental *History of Woman Suffrage*. There were obdurate, menacing disputes—"Susan is punctilious on dates, mother on philosophy, but each contends as stoutly in the other's domain as if equally strong on both points"—but after fights and dark withdrawals on both sides the anger dissolved, and back to work they went: "the one that was unquestionably right assumes it, and the other silently concedes the fact. They never explain, nor apologize, nor shed tears, nor make up, as other people do."

In the 1890s, the two continued to visit each other. Neither of them lived to see the winning of the vote. At the end of what turned out to be their last visit, Anthony, in tears, asked if they would ever see each other again. "Oh yes," Stanton replied briskly, "if not here, then in the hereafter, if there is one—and if there isn't we shall never know it." Stanton died in 1902. Anthony went on traveling, agitating, organizing; frail and ill, she made her last public appearance at NAWSA's conference in 1906, where she offered her formulation, still quoted, that "failure is impossible."

The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920. Word for word, it was the text that Stanton and Anthony had introduced to a disdainful Congress forty-five years earlier. Stanton had predicted—correctly, it turns out—that if the Fourteenth Amendment did not enfranchise women, it would take another half century to win the vote; and there is no evidence that Anthony disagreed. "We are sowing winter wheat,," Stanton judged matter-of-factly, "which other hands than ours will reap and enjoy."

Ken Burns frames *Not for Ourselves Alone* as an act of retrieval, of rescuing this history from oblivion. It is a confusing proposition, since Burns is not in any sense a historian, but an ardent popularizer of work that others have produced. His film utilizes as talking heads a group of feminist historians and biographers who have spent years writing the books on which the film depends. This history is hardly "lost."

And yet Burns's claim has a measure of melancholy truth. After three decades of scholarship in American women's history—work that has set the standard for women's history across the world—women's rights and its leaders still rate only a picture or a paragraph in most high school courses, and a quick mention in political histories. Outside academia, the story of one of the most important mass democratic movements in the country's history continues to be "hidden," except in the Susan B. Anthony silver dollar, the problematic coin that taxi drivers spurn because it is too easily confused with a quarter.

But then again, what precinct of American history is not hidden from contemporary America? No one—not the hairdresser, not the Wall Street trader, not the Princeton student—seems actually to remember even the history of the Great White Men that supposedly shrouds and impedes our consciousness. Each new addition to the thick popular record of the subordinated classes (women, blacks, immigrants) in best-sellers, Hollywood films, PBS documentaries, biographies, and TV docudramas purports to rip aside this heavy veil of ignorance and obscurantism. And still nobody seems to know much about these histories "from the bottom up," either. The result is an endless cycle of remembering what was forgotten after it was remembered after it was forgotten.

In the last quarter of a century, a seismic shift in European and American historical scholarship pushed the history of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women, along with the social histories of other so-called voiceless people, from the margins of the profession to somewhere close to the center. This change reshaped college teaching and rippled out through curatorial staffs into museums, touching off the "history wars" of the early 1990s. But it did not reach the secondary schools. Aggravated by a general abdication of history teaching in public education, the new history failed to create a fund of common knowledge in the public. And so we live with the paradox of constantly "discovering" what has been "hidden," even though what has been "hidden" has been the subject of countless scholarly articles, books, debates, college courses, and conservative denunciations of "politically correct" history.

IT IS INTO this gap—between the common knowledge of the universities and the historical ignorance of the public—that Burns has so usefully stepped, by inventing a visual medium for history from the bottom up. To the untrained eye, nineteenth-century photography is a listless body of severe images: genre views and portraits mostly tedious, occasionally terrible in their unalterable morbidity. How dead those people are! But Burns discovered how a moving camera could vivify the old prints and still respect their integrity. His camera moves sedulously across the surfaces of the old photographs, until one almost has the feeling of slow-motion action; and the duration of its movement makes the images seem large and deep, as it ponders details that are otherwise submerged in the monotones. The effect is a verisimilitude of seeing in the past. Burns intersperses the black-and-white sequences with contemporary color shots of actual settings—landscapes that have survived the events of the past, buildings that are still standing—thus creating a you-are-there drama without the hokey trappings of costumed actors and stage sets. Mottled and flecked old tintypes of stiff Victorians become, amazingly, a window into a past whose movements and sounds only faintly elude us.

But alas, it isn't that easy. Burns's idiom, for all its immediacy, has the unwitting effect of sealing the past in its own little box. His agreeable films are not so different, really, from a stereopticon view. The smear of sepia, the generic old-time music, the folksy plangency of the actors' voices: it all creates a warm wistfulness for the world that we have lost. This is a past that is entirely, irrevocably, tidily, and safely past.

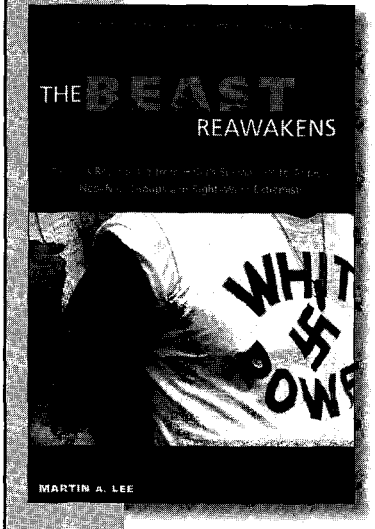
It is certainly not a past that registers change: events occur, characters move on and off the stage, Stanton and Anthony get older, but it is all fundamentally unvarying. The palette of crepuscular tones does not alter. Like a nineteenth-century sentimental novel, Burns's documentary reaches an emotional pitch toward the end, with long deathbed and funeral sequences devoted to each of his heroines, and a swelling violin eliciting tears for the sowers of winter wheat, denied their harvest. It is an odd turn for two women who never shed tears like other people; but it is a typical turn. It almost seems as if Burns believes that sniffles and tears are an aid to learning. But Burns's tears do not really denote pain. He has not come to tell us that history is harsh.

Burns's choice of photographs aggravates the sense that we are looking into a stereopticon. The combination of the static old images with the restless contemporary camera was startling and innovative in *The Civil War*, where the photographic record is so extensive. With Stanton and Anthony, however, the visual evidence is much sparser. Burns solves this problem by filling in with images associated loosely with the actual history: a group portrait of young Boston women, circa 1850, fixes for us an image of "women" in 1851, when Stanton and Anthony first met; a photograph of a mother and child in a Wyoming wheat field evokes the Western outback through which Anthony slogged on her suffrage tours. When Stanton scribbles a speech in a hotel room, the camera closes in on an upper-story window in a photograph of some nineteenth-century hotel somewhere. It is an inventive solution, but after a time the flimsiness of the connection between photography and history starts to embarrass Burns's you-are-there premise.

Burns clearly loves these old photographs. At his best, he dwells on their flaked surfaces and their formal effects with discernment, and draws out the expressiveness smoldering in frozen poses, the pleasure of the half-tones, and the ingenuity of the compositions. But the documentarian's assumption that these are simply illustrations, a clear window into the past, wears thin; and the muteness of the photographs themselves begins to nag at you, as if they want you to know that they have retained some of their secrets, that they are not as legible and as useful as the filmmaker would like you to think.

After all, photographs are themselves the products of history. They show not only realities, but also interpretations of realities. What representations of men's and women's relations do all those family groups convey? What might the local photographer have captured in a marvelous, weird tableau of the Anthony farmhouse

If you thought Fascism died with Hitler, think again...



THE BEAST REAWAKENS

Fascism's Resurgence from Hitler's Spymasters to Today's Neo-Nazi Groups and Right-Wing Extremists
Martin A. Lee

"An important book. . .The best-documented account of the fluctuating fortunes of the far right in Europe and America in the late 20th century." —Conor Cruise O'Brien

"A vivid survey of fascist resurgence." —*New York Times Book Review*

"This compelling, intelligent investigation, which reads more like a thriller than a history lesson, contributes much toward understanding the politics of hatred." —*Publishers Weekly*

ROUTLEDGE

At bookstores, or call 1-800-634-7064; Fax 1-800-248-4724
Visit our Web site at www.routledge-ny.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

before the Civil War, where top-hatted men scattered about the yard stare in profile off into the far distance? Even the formulaic studio portraits of the two women deserve critical iconographic commentary. But Burns is not interested in anything but their look.

Anthony turns out to be far more photogenic, at least in our terms. She liked to pose in half-profile, her simple dark dresses and lace collars heightening the effects of her high cheekbones and sleekly pulled-back hair to make a stirring image of intelligent martyrology, or single-minded devotion to the noble cause. Stanton's round face was capped with fat white curls; always pleased with herself, she presented herself face-on to the camera, draped and furbelowed in the pretty clothes she loved, looking more like one of Dickens's whirligigs of good-natured matronhood than a commanding intellectual. "The many-idea'd feminism" that dwelled inside that very large head never did achieve visual representation in her portraits. There is a great deal in history that is not visible to the eye.

THESE LIMITATIONS ARE less evident in Geoffrey Ward's book. It, too, is laden with photographs, but the images are not supposed to "speak for themselves"; they are accompanied by an intelligent narrative. Ward's volume is no mere tie-in. It can stand on its own as a popular rendition of sophisticated history. Ward writes beautifully, and he knows how to weigh evidence and how to assess the salience of events. He quotes shrewdly from the words of his protagonists. Although the interpretation is far from exciting or original, he freshens his material by including new essays by scholars. Two of them are especially arresting. Ann Gordon's article on Stanton and Anthony on the road is a revelation of what their pursuit of a national movement cost them in tedium, discomfort, loneliness, and bad health, as well as a sketch of the more general conditions of work for peripatetic American intellectuals. Ellen Carol Dubois nicely analyzes the deleterious effects of the erasure of Stanton's memory on the history of women's rights. The combination of fine writing, comprehensive synthesis, original scholarship, and extensive citation from Stanton's and Anthony's correspondence and speeches makes this a definitive volume for students and lay readers seeking to know more.

The state of wanting to know more, of course, is what any historian hopes to provoke in her audience. It is a delicate curiosity that the historian tries to enlist, a keenness for knowledge that depends on a counterpoint between the past and the present that cannot be allowed to collapse into "relevance." Burns has an instinct for setting that counterpoint ticking. He gives us a past that is ineffably appealing; and he drums up a longing for a time that we, too, might have occupied, in our ordinariness and in our vaguely suspected capacities for great things, too. In a word, Burns seduces; and the name for his seduction is nostalgia. He is in the nostalgia business. His films are winning and (as they used to say) educational, but finally they are the historiographical equivalent of Restoration Hardware.

Everything is too soft, too elderly, too legato, too littered with the signifiers of the antique. But the world of Stanton and Anthony was not soft, and it was not even so antique. It was a riven world; a world of monumental clashes; a world of aspirations for justice and greatness for women. The music that played in people's heads was not only fiddles and parlor pianos, it was also Beethoven, the Italian opera, Wagner. For years, these women spoke vigorously and stridently; not in richly measured, harmonious cadences, but in dissonant, noisy, unappeasable voices that gladly ran the risk of enraging and alienating those who heard them. It was good of Ken Burns to introduce Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony into our parlors, but he has made them much too friendly, much too sedate. ■

Harry Potter and the Spirit of the Age

Fear of Not Flying

By LEE SIEGEL

ONCE UPON A time, a boy on a broomstick flew into a nation that was significantly free from tradition and prescribed custom. So great was its freedom in this regard that it turned every social incident and every cultural expression into a symbolic occasion that might supply a sorely needed orientation to national life. If two teenagers went on a rampage of killing in a high school, the slaughter had partly to embody the nation's surrender to television or computers. If a series of books came out about the adventures of a nearly adolescent boy swooping around on a broomstick, the rapturous reception of these books had partly to embody the craving for an antidote to the national submission to television or computers. Yet the popularity of the Harry Potter books actually has everything to do with our symbolizing tendency itself.

That is because all this fancy pop-critical theory quickly hardens into leaden, clinical fact, testified to by an array of experts who are glad to make themselves available to all the technologies of punditry. Why the killing? Not just because of television and the Internet, but because of early trauma, poor self-esteem, a broken home, inept guidance counselors and school psychologists, and so on. Clunk, clunk, clunk: it is like dully making change for events of tremendous denomination, though none of the routine inquiries ended up applying to the Columbine killers. Swamped by these so-called facts of mental life, the specificity of what happens in the world outside the mind gets lost; the world seems to turn on what takes place in the mind, and what takes place in the mind is whatever the electronic sages tell us does.

HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE
by J. K. Rowling
(Scholastic, 309 pp., $17.95)

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS
by J. K. Rowling
(Scholastic, 341 pp., $17.95)

HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN
by J. K. Rowling
(Scholastic, 431 pp., $19.95)

What's more, if you protest against the clinical facts that supposedly define you—they also include the fact of where you come from, and of what group you belong to—you are deemed outside the pale of a century of improvements in scientific plain-seeing. You are "in denial," which is like saying that you are allied with the powers of darkness and irrationality. Our cultural productions reflect this state of affairs. Memoirs stress the standard, formative facts; works of art hallow the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

standard, formative facts. Now, this relentlessly rational organization of inner and outer reality, of cultural documents and works of art, makes for a fantastic situation. For underneath it all, life flows incalculably on, and we know and feel this.

For this reason, the rapturous reception of the Harry Potter books is heartening, because J.K. Rowling is a literary artist, and these three books possess more imaginative life than the majority of novels that are published in this country in any given year. They are full of marvelous invention and humor and fun, but they have more than that. They are not fantasy-escapes from mundane existence, as they are being hailed; they are escapes from a general condition of hyper-rationality that, because it ignores the element of incalculability in life, has become unreasonable to the point of seeming receptive to fantasy and the occult as escapes from life. With Harry Potter, Rowling has brought reality back into the literature of escape, and back into our fantasy-culture. What a rarity, a literary imagination that is not self-conscious, and studied, and uptight.

THE THREE HARRY POTTER novels that have appeared to date spin the tale of an orphan who is eleven when the series begins, and grows older by a year in each successive volume. One night, the infant Harry appears on the doorstep of the Dursleys, his aunt and uncle and their gluttonous bully of a young son, Dudley. Harry spends ten years with them, during which time they treat him cruelly—they make the sadistic Aunt Spiker and Aunt Sponge of Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach* look like hospice-workers—making him sleep in a cupboard and barely giving him enough food to survive.

Uncle Vernon and Aunt Petunia have told Harry that his parents died in a car accident. But Harry's parents had a secret, which Harry discovers on his eleventh birthday: they were powerful and respected members of England's wizard community. And they never died in a car crash. They were killed by the evil wizard Voldemort, who lost much of his power when he tried to finish off the infant Harry but, for some inexplicable reason, failed to do so, leaving Harry alive and with a scar in the shape of a lightning bolt. Indeed, Harry with his green eyes, and Voldemort with his green light, mysteriously share a granule of the same nature, though Harry is unambiguously good and Voldemort is unambiguously evil.

Harry is saved from his wicked step-parents by his parents' wizard friends and sent to Hogwarts, a famous private school for wizard children, though he has to return to his aunt and uncle over the summer holidays. The books tell the story of Harry's adventures at Hogwarts, where, among other things, he discovers that non-wizard people are called Muggles; and learns how to play the game Quidditch, which is conducted flying through the air on broomsticks; and finds his best friends in the bookish daughter of two dentist-Muggles and the son of an impoverished wizard family; and does battle with a mountain troll in the girls' bathroom; and learns how to make friends with a hippogriff (you stare unblinking into its fierce orange eye, bow, and wait for it to bow).

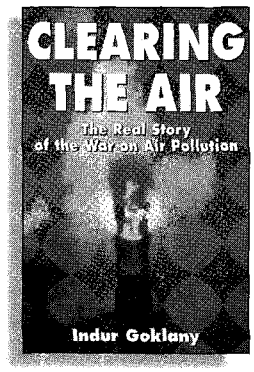
WHAT IS IT with the British, why are they so good at creating stories in which there is this world and an alternative world? J.M. Barrie, Frances Hodgson Burnett, E. Nesbit, Lewis Carroll, J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis—they all come from somewhere in Great Britain. (Rowling herself is Scottish.) Of course, there is the creative stimulus of living on cozy little islands shrouded by fog. And there is the nice constant scare of the surrounding sea making your neighbors seem more alien and more likely to arrive unexpectedly; and the venerable class system, which enacts alternative worlds side by side; and, for a time, there was the strange, distant galaxy of empire. Or maybe it is just that the battlements and the turrets of British common sense are so solidly established that British writers can imagine its opposite with luxurious sanguinity.

But why are we so entranced by the creation of alternative worlds in the first place? The answer might have something to do with the conventional premise of so many children's stories, which is that they revolve around children whose parents are dead or absent or diminished. (Nesbit, the Fabian socialist, liked to make her fathers bankrupts or falsely accused of selling secrets to the Russians.) This is partly the reflection of a child's tyrannical wish to have total sovereignty over a parent-free world, and it is also a reflection of the adult author's childlike impulse to have total sovereignty over his or her created world. But surely there is also an attenuated Christian influence: Jesus in Jerusalem refusing to acknowledge his parents, Jesus exhorting his followers to leave their parents and their homes and to follow him. The unaffiliated, deracinated state is a state of pure spiritual receptivity, and this is the condition of much children's literature, which introduces the child to the idea of change. And since the gradual withdrawal of parents is an inevitable thing, the classic children's stories are often semi-parables of the terrors and the pleasures of separation.

"*Clearing the Air* is informative, engaging, and optimistic. Read it and breathe deeply."

—Gregg Easterbrook
Author, *A Moment on the Earth*

This book makes the compelling argument that Washington's 30-year regulatory war against air pollution has actually done little to improve air quality. The cleaner air we enjoy today is, instead, the result of gains in per capita incomes, rapidly improving technology, and the shift from a manufacturing- to a service-based economy. The author also argues that state and local governments were actively taking steps to clean up the air before the federal government became involved.



Clearing the Air: The Real Story of the War on Air Pollution
by Indur Goklany
Available at fine bookstores.
187 pp./$19.95 cloth/$10.95 paperback

CATO INSTITUTE

www.cato.org • 1-800-767-1241

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE APPEAL OF alternative worlds goes much further, deep into the vicissitudes of our maturity. As our parents recede, we rely on our imaginations to construct another authority—which is to say, another world. The pressure that our ego exerts on the objects of its hunger and its need amounts to a desire to enchant the people around us. Yet beyond our magical circle of bonds and affection lies the other world, the world outside the reach of our enchantments. We have to negotiate between these two regions on a daily basis, and to keep our balance as the boundaries move, and to maintain our poise throughout the times when our world takes on the aspect of the mundane, and the world beyond acquires the allure of enchantment (it notices us, it seizes us and holds us in its power, victory is ours).

So the children's story of a solitary imagination, operating avidly and resourcefully in the shifting world, is also the naked, subterranean story of our adult days. The point is not that a good children's story is, as people like to say, written also for adults. The point is that a good children's story is the story of the making of an adulthood. That is why the best children's stories have a wit and an urbanity that make their most extravagant inventions all the more believable.

From *Peter Pan*:

> "What is your name?"
> "Peter Pan."
> She was already sure that he must be Peter, but it did seem a comparatively short name.
> "Is that all?"
> "Yes," he said rather sharply. He felt for the first time that it was a shortish name...
> She asked where he lived.
> "Second to the right," said Peter, "and then straight on till morning."
> "What a funny address!"
> Peter had a sinking feeling. For the first time he felt that perhaps it was a funny address...
> "Don't have a mother," he said. Not only had he no mother, but he had not the slightest desire to have one. He thought them very over-rated persons.

From *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*:

> In one corner there was a door which Lucy thought must lead to Mr Tumnus's [a faun] bedroom, and on one wall was a shelf full of books. Lucy looked at these while he was setting out the tea things. They had titles like ... *Nymphs and Their Ways* or *Men, Monks, and Gamekeepers: A Study in Popular Legend* or *Is Man a Myth?*

From Ian Fleming's *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*:

> Now, Joe the Monster was in fact head of an international gang of robbers and ruffians and he was known in France as Joe le Monstre.

Rowling herself, with her narcissistic wizard-professor Gilderoy Lockhart, to take just one example from her books, masterfully does this dry trace of a satirical tone, though with a touch of farce. The renowned author of *Magical Me*, among other volumes, Lockhart praises his student, Hermione Granger, Harry's bookish friend, for supplying the right answer to an exam question that Lockhart posed about himself:

> ... but Miss Hermione Granger knew my secret ambition is to rid the world of evil and market my own range of hair-care potions—good girl!

I'm sorry, but I find this sort of thing hilarious. I also find it replenishing, since I cannot think of any "adult" fiction that attempts genuinely to satirize the celebrity-fraud. Most wondrous of all is that Rowling does not use the archness, and the worldliness, and the knowingness to protect herself or to promote herself, to remind us that she is too sophisticated to be taken in by her own fictions. On the *contraire*, as Joe le Monstre would say. As in Barrie and Lewis and Fleming, Rowling wants to prove the strength of her fiction by testing its capacity to assimilate the worldliness. This is because Rowling, like her predecessors, has total confidence in her imagined world, and is unafraid of delivering herself up to her fancy. Or, as Peter Pan puts it, when the human children ask him to tell them how to fly: "You just think lovely wonderful thoughts... and they lift you up into the air."

THE ABILITY TO fly is the most pressing issue of our time. And it is not just the trend-diviners and the glossy social-scientistic savants who make it hard to know how to fly. There are also the fantasists themselves, for instance the so-called magical realists, who pretend that fantastic occurrences are continuous with reality. Magical realism snubs the intractable evidence of reality, and thus never allows readers to exercise their capacity to believe the unbelievable against all the evidence of reality. In snubbing reality, magical realism slights the power of imagination.

But Rowling writes her tales in a manner that may be called realistic magicalism—which preserves the discontinuity between fantasy and reality. She takes it for granted that, against all the stubborn evidence that she has preserved to the contrary, her readers will nevertheless leave the ground with Harry Potter. In maintaining the gravitational pull of reality, she pays homage to the magical leap of imagination.

And there are still other obstacles to the genuine levitation of the spirit. For one thing, you have to leave your consciousness of self behind, and that is a foolish thing to do nowadays, like leaving your car unlocked on a city street. For another, developing the confidence that you may ascend above the sum of your gritty givens might stick you with the appearance of being an egotist—like puffed-up Peter Pan, or the conceited Phoenix in Nesbit's *The Phoenix and the Carpet*, or like all flying creatures. That would be disadvantageous in a society whose citizens feel more comfortable around narcissists with fragile egos like Lockhart than around egotists with selfless natures like Harry.

BUT ROWLING KNOWS the value of flying, and so do her readers. This is why she makes the game Quidditch, a combination of soccer and rugby, an event of central importance. The worst effect of a crisis at Hogwarts—a rogue troll wandering about the halls, Voldemort's minions on the loose, the dangerous Dementors going around making everyone feel sad and hopeless—is that a Quidditch match is canceled. And the happy resolution of every book involves Harry's house, Gryffindor, winning a crucial game of Quidditch. Indeed, Harry is never so happy as when he is playing the game; it keeps his mind off his troubles.

Harry would make a very bad contemporary memoirist, because when he is zooming around on his broomstick and thinks of his parents' violent deaths, sometimes remembering their screams, the experience of flying seems unreal to him and he nearly falls off his broom to his own death. The formative trauma, for Rowling, is the true unreality. Only the airborne imagination fosters self-forgetfulness, which makes work possible, work that sustains a life. Thus Quidditch, with its echo of "quiddity," meaning the essential quality of a thing. Quidditch, a vital, self-forgetful busyness, is the essential activity of Harry Potter's world.

Rowling herself seems to have the habit of pure artistic confidence, of egotistical self-abandoning. She appears to be totally immersed in her imagined world, and you can see this in her books' layers of literary allusion. At the beginning of Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, the strangely

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

disconsolate narrator tells us that as a boy, he once drew a picture of a boa constrictor. He showed it to several adults, who failed to recognize it for what it was. They thought the drawing showed a hat. This, says the narrator, was the beginning and the end of his career as a painter, for "grown-ups never understand anything by themselves." The capacity to read properly a child's drawing of a boa constrictor becomes a test of the litheness of adult imagination.

Now, it happens that in *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* the Dursleys allow Harry to accompany them to the zoo, where he meets a boa constrictor. To Harry's astonishment, he and the reptile have a conversation, which comes down to the boa constrictor's desire to see Brazil, where he has never been, despite the information conveyed by the card on his cage; it reads, "Boa Constrictor, Brazil." Though Harry is not aware at this point of his magical powers, he somehow has the effect of making the glass front of the reptile's cage disappear, which allows the boa constrictor to slither out to freedom, hissing to Harry as he departs, "Brazil, here I come... Thanksss, amigo." Of course, Harry's non-wizard relatives could not hear Harry talking with the snake. In this way, the capacity to hear a boa constrictor speak becomes a test of the litheness of adult imagination.

THERE IS ALSO a willow that, rather than serving as benign backdrop to the adventures of Mole and Toad, "whomps" anyone who comes near it with its giant branches; and a wardrobe that the children use, not as a portal to a magical world, but as a hiding-place in which they can eavesdrop on adult conversations (in other words, as a more realistic portal to a more available magical world); and a phoenix named Fawkes, referring to the moment in Nesbit's tale when the children discover the phoenix on Guy Fawkes' Day (a good day for a socialist). My favorite allusion is a flying car with its own mind. It does its work and then trundles away from its owners into the Forbidden Forest, where it goes native, tooling around and covering itself in leaves and branches and mud.

There is no reason for these references, it seems to me, beyond the writer's wholehearted absorption in her universe. That, too, is perhaps why these books are so appealing: in our practical and utilitarian artistic atmosphere, they are ends in themselves. But I don't mean to make Rowling out to be another Joyce. Though she has produced works of literature, they are still primarily books for children and young adults. Their reported popularity among adults says more about the dearth of good fiction than about the books themselves.

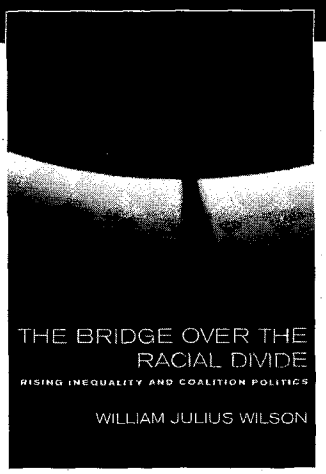
IN FACT, PARENTS expecting a respite from the violence in popular culture will be surprised by the amount of violence that Rowling introduces into her tales. I cannot think of any classic children's story that has as much of it. Rowling is a clever writer, and she has assimilated just about every basic bit of business you might encounter in an action movie. At one point, she even has Harry and his friends pointing their wands and kicking in a door. Legs get broken, the children get thrown against walls, blood drips, bones crunch. Sometimes the characters even cry out, "Aaaargh!" that trusty old comic-book exclamation.

If Rowling has absorbed Fleming's *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, she has also mastered the conventions of the James Bond movies. So far, every book ends with the standard Bond wrap-up, in which the captured British agent—in this case, Harry Potter—waits patiently to be killed while the villain helpfully explains the fine points of the plot, reviews the highlights of his villainy, and discusses his plans for the future. Then comes the violent reversal and the happy outcome.

But this patina of rough action is all to the good. Most little boys spend much of their time thinking about ways to decapitate other little boys—and of course never do. Most little girls spend much of their time thinking of ways to please little boys, mainly by laughing at their most embarrassing qualities or crying as hard as they can whenever they are around. Rowling's violence is a blessed acknowledgment of the nature of children, of their strong-willed impatience with their own alleged innocence.

Harry and his friends Hermione and Ron Weasley are good kids, but they are not innocent, Wordsworthian kids. They usually do the right thing, and they always feel bad when they do the wrong thing. But they pass through a spectrum of hurtful impulses along the way, some of which they act on. This means that their goodness is not only a passive gentleness, easily wounded by the world. It is also the goodness of being able to act in the world. Since they are built with the potential do harm, Harry and his friends are also built to endure harm. The inexorable violation of their childhood "innocence" will not lodge its leaden factuality in their minds like burrs; it will not spell their doom as persons. Harry's scar is not only evidence of a deep emotional injury but, more consequentially, it is also the sign by which everyone in the wizard world recognizes him as the famous Harry Potter, the boy who defeated the villain Voldemort.

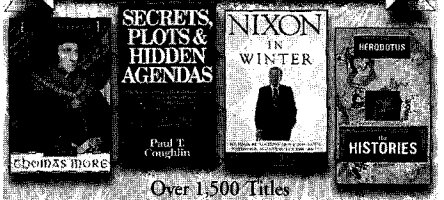
"A must read for all who care about justice and democracy in a multicultural America."
–Henry Louis Gates



WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON
THE BRIDGE OVER THE RACIAL DIVIDE
Rising Inequality and Coalition Politics

$19.95 at bookstores or order 1-800-822-6657
www.ucpress.edu
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Unabridged Audiobooks



Over 1,500 Titles
Available for Purchase or Rental by Mail
for a free catalogue, write or call:
Dept. NE • P.O. Box 969 • Ashland, Oregon 97520
1-800-729-2665
http://www.blackstoneaudio.com
BLACKSTONE AUDIOBOOKS
Unabridged Recordings of Great Books

NEW AUTHORS
PUBLISH YOUR WORK
ALL SUBJECTS CONSIDERED:
FICTION, BIOGRAPHY, POETRY, RELIGION, CHILDREN'S
AUTHORS WORLDWIDE INVITED
WRITE, OR SEND YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO:
MINERVA PUBLISHING CO.
1001 BRICKELL BAY DR., # 2310, MIAMI FL 33131

Looking to increase sales? Looking for a target market? Starting a new business?
Consider THE NEW REPUBLIC Small Space Program.
Contact Shannel Myers at 212.924.8700 for reservations and information.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The many-sided nature of children is also, perhaps, what Rowling is getting at when she hints that Harry partakes of Voldemort's nature. As the French name implies, Harry has stolen from death its terrible power, but only as a way to fly from death: what Harry has gotten from Voldemort is the instinct of self-preservation, which is a mercurial, double-sided thing. Such a portrait of children's complexity, at least to the degree that you find it in Rowling's tales, is something new in children's literature. She has hit our contemporary moment right on the head.

Rowling's complicated violence has a functional purpose, too. It draws in children who might otherwise be won away by empty fantasies of violence. Once distracted by Rowling's highly enjoyable scrim of action, they will find a fusion of entertainment with an autonomous artistic will. Each book follows the hero's archetypal journey—in the form of a detective story—from increasingly turbulent surface, to life-endangering depths, and back up to sunlit surface. (Uncle Vernon, whose absence of imagination perfects his cruelty, manufactures drills for a living.) And in every book, Harry confronts his parents' deaths at the same time as he fights to preserve his life, an ordeal that seems to have to do with Harry finding a way to stop dwelling on his parents' deaths.

INSIDE THAT PATTERN, Rowling structures each book with a different theme that she develops through reiterated words, images, and motifs. Her tales are remarkably unified for children's stories. In the first volume, Harry first learns about his wizard nature, and discovers that he is not the worthless boy that his aunt and uncle have told him he is. The theme is the nature of identity, which is hidden, elusive, and immovable. And so when he goes shopping for a wand right before school begins—it is required—Harry finds that the wand chooses him. The nicest conceit is the Mirror of Erised, with its strange inscription: "*Erised stra ehru oyt ube cafru oyt on wohsi.*" Read in the opposite direction, it says, "I show not your face but your heart's desire." At last, a formula for identity that must be read backwards! And it teaches, both literally and figuratively, the idea that you are what you want and not what you appear to be, and that what you want follows from who you mysteriously are, and that your desires can also change. The book's conclusion has Harry fighting for his life with "The Man with Two Faces."

The second book, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, deals with origins and class. It portrays fame as a reward for character and as a path up through society, and it depicts celebrity—in the figure of Lockhart—as a scourge on character, and as an irritant to social harmony. Rowling, for all her uncanny inventiveness, means business. In this volume, the moral is that your choices define you, not your origins. Seemingly good people disclose their villainy; apparent transgressors reveal their innocence; transfiguration becomes an issue; and the phoenix, whose origins are ashes, saves the day.

The latest volume, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, pushes the artfulness further. It is about depression, black moods, days when a kid just can't go on, because everyone tells him—or her—that he is nothing, and that things will never change. Sirius Black is the villain, who turns out to be the good guy, because things do change, after all. And the Divination teacher, Professor Trelawney, ends up getting everything wrong, because nobody can tell you what the score is; you have to find that out for yourself.

People such as Professor Trelawney set themselves up as reality-instructors, but they are projecting their own inadequacies. They hope that by convincing you to bow to your supposed limitations, they will make up for their inability to overcome their own limitations. But you have to travel along the axial lines of your own unique existence... wait a minute, that's *The Adventures of Augie March*! Americans may love the Harry Potter books because they tell a British school-story, but the British must love them because the real lessons learned at Hogwarts remind them of America.

Rowling's world is very artfully patterned. Consider, finally, her conceit of having owls deliver the mail in the wizard world. Harry has his very own courier, an affectionate though high-strung snowy owl named Hedwig. Hedvig happens to be the name of the little girl in Ibsen's play involving another bird, *The Wild Duck*. Roald Dahl certainly had Ibsen's play in mind when, in *The Witches*, he has the Norwegian grandmother tell the story of a little girl with a pet duck who is abducted by means of nefarious magic. I have no idea if Rowling is making kindred literary mischief. But it doesn't matter. Ibsen's play is about the "life-lie" that we tell ourselves in order to bear as much reality as we can. It is about life-lies that deform and destroy, but also about those that become a part of truth because they make life possible. And J.K. Rowling has similarly qualified our spiteful and ungenerous adult notion of denial, and drawn out of it a beautiful human affirmation. She is spinning an honest and necessary deceit about the world. ■

CORRESPONDENCE

continued from page 5

predicated on homework undone in the guise of lowbrow wit and middlebrow wordplay"?

Leon Wieseltier is certainly no common soul, not a humble one—nor a helpful one. Cornel West writes again, "The degraded state of public conversation in American culture leads us to lower our intellectual expectations in regard to a spirit of empathy, charity or generosity. But the virtual absence of fair-mindedness, the predominance of such intellectual obscenity and personal vulgarity bespeaks a gangsterization of the mind that it behooves all of us to resist."

Ad hominem criticisms are often the most entertaining, sadistic, and safe strategies of rhetoric—with the understanding that they can boomerang if their target has the intellectual courage to own his words.

JOHN DONATICH
Publisher
Basic Books
New York, New York

Overstretch

TO THE EDITORS:

Charles Lane's paean to John McCain ("Swoon Song," October 18) is an excellent piece on the dilapidated status of American foreign policy and shows how Clinton has clearly botched a momentous opportunity for America and for the cause of democracy worldwide.

However, Lane's offhand dismissal of "imperial overstretch" and his denigration of the realist school of international relations is a fault in his argument. While there is certainly a moral dimension to American foreign policy, there needs to be a strong realist strain to temper our ambitions, or else we *will* end up in protracted conflicts that can't accomplish anything (Somalia stands out as a good example of this).

The paradox of hegemony is that the hegemon cannot exercise all of its power at once. Claiming that a superpower must "use it or lose it" is disingenuous, for history has shown that, once a balance is disrupted, weaker powers will band together to challenge the stronger (France under Napoleon felt it had to use its power, and the result was catastrophic). America is thus constrained in what it *can* do, but Lane is right to argue that it should and is able to do more.

CHRISTOPHER A. HARTWELL
Reason Public Policy Institute
Los Angeles, California

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Haverhills' Best Sellers*

*But read this ad for an even better deal!

More than just a telescope...more than just a microscope...

Episcope™
(the complete vest-pocket optical system)

still only $59.95*

•Even at its highest magnification of 30x, the Episcope™ resolves as distinctly as any laboratory microscope, yet it is only 2" long. An optical miracle!

Remove the *Episcope*™ from its fitted leather case and it's a 30-power microscope. A twist of the wrist converts it to a 3x telescope, or a unique 3x telescope-loupe. Another twist, and you have a choice of magnifiers and loupes: 5x, 10x, and 15x powers. The *Episcope*™, only 2" long, was developed in Wetzlar (Germany), the home of world-famous Leica cameras; it's now being made by one of Asia's finest lens makers. The optics are superb: brilliant luminosity, needle-sharp focus, absolute planarity, total chromatic correction, and fully anastigmatic. The *Episcope*™ is the first choice of geologists, biologists, numismatists, philatelists, engineers, and just anybody who likes to see the infinite detail in his/her surroundings. It comes with a plastic "tripod" for extended observations at 15x or 30x magnifications. ***Episcope*™ #1062F283a**

Never let a dead car battery stall you again—go with...

Car Starter II™
only $49.95*

• Car Starter II™ *will keep its charge for years and will work in the most extreme hot/cold temperature conditions. Its output is an astonishing 7.5 amps., incomparably higher than any competing unit.* Car Starter II™ *measures 8.5" x 2" x 2" and weighs only 27 oz. You should always keep it in the glove compartment of every one of your cars!*

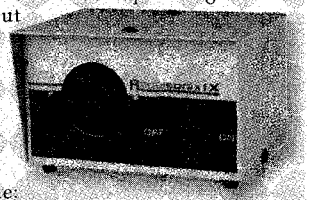
The sickening "click-click" of a dead car battery is the most discouraging sound a motorist can hear. You are stranded—sometimes for hours or in dangerous neighborhoods—or are dependent on the kindness of strangers, who might not even have jumper cables. And you know how dangerous jumper cables (and strangers!) can be.

This can never happen to you with *Car Starter II*™, a portable power source that will charge your car battery in 15 minutes or less—just by plugging it into your cigarette lighter! After use, you can recharge the unit again right through that same cigarette lighter. And that isn't all: You can also use *Car Starter II*™ to operate any and all 12-volt appliances, such as small TV sets (up to 16 hours), portable fridges, cellular phones (up to 100 hours), camcorders, and much more.

Don't ever again worry about a dead battery and a stalled car—give convenience and safety to yourself and your loved ones and order your *Car Starter II*™ *unit(s)* today! ***CarStarter II*™ #1080F283b**

Rid your home of varmints and pests once and for all...

Rodelsonix IX™
only $69.95*



•Rodelsonix IX™ *is an industrial-type unit, the most powerful you can get. It's a humane and effective system to get rid of pests—once and for all.*

Mice, rats, roaches, bats, fleas, spiders and other pests make life miserable at home or at the plant. Old-fashioned poisons get rid of them—but only temporarily, and they are a hazard to you and to your pets. *Rodelsonix IX*™ works on a different principle: It delivers a tremendous blast of ultrasound—inaudible to you and your pets—that disrupts the nervous systems of those pests. They'll leave your home within a few weeks—never to return. No poison and no mess.

Rodelsonix IX™ is an industrial-type unit designed and engineered to be effective in restaurants, factories, and food-processing plants. It protects up to 10,000 sq. ft. (70,000 cu. ft.). It has six variable pitch and "loudness" settings. You can even adjust it to keep larger pests, such as raccoons or rabbits, at bay. ***Rodelsonix IX*™ #1007F283c**

A breakthrough in audio technology...

MR-318T AM/FM/TV Stereo Personal Digital Radio™
only $69.95*

•The MR-318T *works on two AA-batteries (included). It measures only 5 x 2.5 inches and weighs less than six ounces. Fidelity is astonishing! The maker of the* MR-318T *receiver is one of the world's leaders in the production of advanced radio equipment.*

There is absolutely nothing like it. This outstanding personal receiver fits in your shirt pocket or fits inconspicuously on your desk or night table. It's packed with features that give you crisp reception over the entire AM and FM bands and the audio portions of all VHF TV channels—2 to 13. Here are some of the other great features of this breakthrough personal digital radio:

- PLL Synthesized Tuning
- Built-In Speaker
- Nice-Styled Aluminum Case
- State-of-the-Art Design
- Automatic Scanning
- Headphones Included
- 25 Memory Presets: 10 AM, 10 FM, 5 TV
- FM Directional Antenna
- Batteries Included

Get "shirtpocket" AM/FM reception as you never had before. Catch the audio portion of your favorite TV show, wherever you are; watch the late TV show without disturbing your partner; listen to the commentator when you watch the ball game or any sporting event—and much more. Order it today! ***MR-318T AM/FM/TV Stereo Personal Digital Radio*™ #1074F283d**

Almost as bright as the sun...

Night Piercer™
1 Million CandlePower Halogen Spotlight

only $69.95*

•Night Piercer™ *is constructed of heavy-duty high-impact polypropylene. It comes with a super-bright 100-watt halogen bulb and red gel for use as warning light. 110-volt and 12-volt rechargers are also included.*

The *Night Piercer*™ casts a focused beam that can be seen for many miles. It is 20-times brighter than automobile headlights, more luminous than aircraft landing lights. This powerful light is indispensable for tracking and exploring unknown territory and for any contingencies at night, in plane, boat, truck, or car. With its red gel, the *Night Piercer*™ can be a lifesaver in any emergency. The unit contains two sealed heavy-duty lead-acid batteries and can be recharged either through your household current or through the cigarette lighter socket of your car, RV or boat. Both adapters are included, of course. The *Night Piercer*™ should be your companion on all your travels. Don't leave home without it—order it today! ***Night Piercer*™ #1072F283e**

A spyglass in the great naval tradition...

Adm Nelson's Telescope™
(with table tripod) just $59.95*

•The optics of Admiral Nelson's Telescope™ *are "25x30" which means 25x magnification and the great light gathering capacity of a 30-mm objective lens. Admiral Nelson's telescope was made of brass. This replica is heavily chrome-plated for extra beauty and protection. The scope comes with a belt-looped vinyl carrying case. For permanent mounting the scope comes with an extendable table tripod.*

When Horatio Nelson fought the battle of Trafalgar, he used a telescope just like this to monitor the movements of the French-Spanish fleet. Our manufacturer has created a faithful replica of this famous scope. *Admiral Nelson's Telescope*™ measures about five inches in its "collapsed" position. When you extend the four sections to full length, the scope will be thirteen inches long and focused to infinity with needle sharpness. Everything will appear twenty-five times larger than it would to the naked eye. Compare that to standard binoculars which give you only 6x or 8x magnification. If you have ever wanted to own a fine telescope, but found prices a little steep, *Admiral Nelson's Telescope*™ should be your choice. You'll get many years of good use and enjoyment from it. ***Admiral Nelson's Telescope*™ #1069F283f**

***Our "special deal": BUY ANY 2 ITEMS AND GET ANOTHER ONE FREE!**
For instance: Buy a $69.95 item and a $49.95 item and get another $49.95 or lesser-priced item FREE!

(11s)

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER BY TOLL-FREE PHONE OR BY FAX. SEE NUMBERS BELOW.

For customer service, please call (415) 643-2810. For wholesale orders, call Chris Simpson at that same number.

You may order by toll-free phone, by mail, or by fax and pay by check or Visa/MasterCard. Please give order number shown after the item. Add $4.95 shipping/ins. for each item **(except three Car Starter II units, three Rodelsonix IX, or three Adm. Nelson's Telescope for $9.90 or one Night Piercer for $9.95 or three Night Piercers for $19.90)**, plus sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30-day return and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

since 1967
haverhills®
2360 Third St., San Francisco, CA 94107

✆ Order by toll-free phone: (800) 797-7367 or (fastest!) by fax (415) 643-2818 ✆

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Relativity Theory

WERE HE NOT A REACTIONARY and a demagogue, I would feel sorry for Pat Buchanan. Not long ago he held a respected position within the Republican Party, wherein he gave keynote speeches at political conventions, represented the conservative viewpoint on TV talk shows, and was courted by party leaders. Now he has become a figure of almost universal disrepute. His former colleagues in the conservative punditocracy gleefully declare him unfit for the GOP, and his TV appearances, while still frequent, are typically interposed with grainy footage of goose-stepping members of the Wehrmacht—the kind of associative imagery that would make any former White House communications director (even one as right-wing as Buchanan) cringe. The ostensible basis for Buchanan's excommunication is his recent book, which has scandalized the conservative movement. It turns out Buchanan is a 1930s-style America Firster. Imagine! The curious thing is that there were previous signs of such thought in Buchanan, and they were not subtle: he has obsessively defended Nazi war criminals, waxed conspiratorial about the dual loyalties of American Jews, run for president under the campaign slogan "America First," and so on. Granted, it's possible to imagine one or two conservatives for whom Buchanan's book was the straw that broke the camel's back. But it seems as if all the camels' backs broke simultaneously at the precise moment when Buchanan became a threat to the electoral prospects of the Republican Party.

IN THE WASHINGTON LEXICON, Buchanan has turned "radioactive," which means he has violated the norms of decency so flagrantly as to cross the line between man and kook. The procedure for assigning radioactivity typically begins with the discovery of an objectionable factoid, ideally an inflammatory quotation by the subject. In Buchanan's case, the factoid is that he wrote a book arguing that the United States should not have entered World War II. In reality, Buchanan's book is the logical extension of an isolationist worldview held by a large number of conservative Republicans and not a few left-wing Democrats. The real evidence of Buchanan's repugnance is a career of eclectic obsessions that, taken together, are almost impossible to understand except as the product of an animus against Jews and other minorities. But most journalists do not like to make such normative judgments, so they gauge the subject's radioactivity by his allies' willingness to denounce him publicly. Thus, the standard of radioactivity is entirely relativistic. When Jesse Jackson first ran for president in 1984, the gold standard in black militant anti-Semitism was Louis Farrakhan (sound bite: Judaism is "a gutter religion"), against whom Jackson's own views were gauged. Not long ago, a Farrakhan disciple named Khallid Abdul Muhammad delivered an even more poisonous sound bite (Jews are "the bloodsuckers of the black nation"), and then reporters began asking Farrakhan if *he* would denounce Muhammad—which he did, thereby deflecting attention from his own views. (Muhammad didn't think to get himself off the hook by counter-denouncing Farrakhan's anti-Semitism.) On a recent Sunday, Pat Robertson appeared as a panelist on "Face the Nation" not as an object of controversy but as an arbiter of it. Robertson, you might recall, once wrote a book asserting that world history was dictated by a plot of Freemasons, Bolsheviks, and "European bankers." By contrast, Buchanan's treatise looks positively Schlesingerian. Yet Robertson never attained anything close to Buchanan's level of radioactivity, perhaps because few conservative intellectuals had the temerity to invite him to take his 20 million followers out of the Republican Party. By now any stain on his reputation has faded, so Robertson can sagaciously hold forth as a Sunday panelist. On the topic of the Buchanan book, he scolded, "He's discredited himself tremendously." Oh. Has anyone solicited Lyndon LaRouche's thoughts on the matter?

ROBERTSON IS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO benefit from Buchanan's radioactivity. It has also allowed Donald Trump to portray himself as a sane alternative. "It's just a wacko vote," he says of Buchanan's supporters, "and I just can't imagine that anybody can take him seriously." In one recent op-ed, Trump wrote that Buchanan "says stupid things" and then went on to threaten a preemptive bombing of North Korea. The basis for Trump's candidacy, aside from his opposition to Buchanan, is the tired conceit of the businessman-hero: "Having prevailed over a severe (and largely government-created) setback in my own industry, I know the tough decisions a chief executive has to make to return to prosperity." Of course, the life-metaphor argument also suggests another possibility: that, if we elected Trump, he would take the best years of our national life and then dump us to go be president of a younger, more beautiful country, such as Fiji.

TRUMP'S CANDIDACY IS ACTUALLY quite remarkable—it manages to embody all of populism's bombastic ignorance without including any of its reformist impulses. On the one issue about which he has a strong and well-formed view, Trump is aligned with the Beltway's lobbying elite. His core belief, which he brings up at every opportunity, is that all the world's evils stem from the Tax Reform Act of 1986. This is a strange bogeyman for a member of the Reform Party. The Tax Reform Act was a remarkable triumph of populism and reformism. It wiped out thousands of special loopholes and exemptions in the tax code and then used the proceeds to cut tax rates almost in half. Just about every economist, from right to left, approves of this measure; when there are too many loopholes in the tax code, businesses make decisions on the basis of tax law, which creates inefficient drag on the free market. This is what happened during the early '80s in real estate. The tax incentives for commercial real estate were so generous that they encouraged developers to construct buildings purely for tax purposes, even if nobody would lease them. It was a classic horror story of a centrally planned economy: the government was paying people such as Trump to build empty, useless office towers. The Tax Reform Act eliminated these subsidies and used the savings to lower tax rates across the board, resulting in a fairer, more efficient system—and forcing Trump off the federal teat. Trump is so bitter about this that last May he penned an op-ed attacking Bill Bradley for having championed tax reform *13 years earlier*. Tax reform was "one of the worst ideas in recent history," wrote Trump. "When sweeping changes are abruptly enacted, as they were by Mr. Bradley, it puts those businesses in a bad spot." Cue the violin: "People who were banking their retirement on a condominium or a house saw their dreams destroyed. It was a hard time for developers like me." Yes, forcing people to create things that have actual economic value can be cruel. The Reform Party already has Buchanan to shelter factory workers from the ravages of capitalism. Somebody has to speak for the endangered real estate mogul.

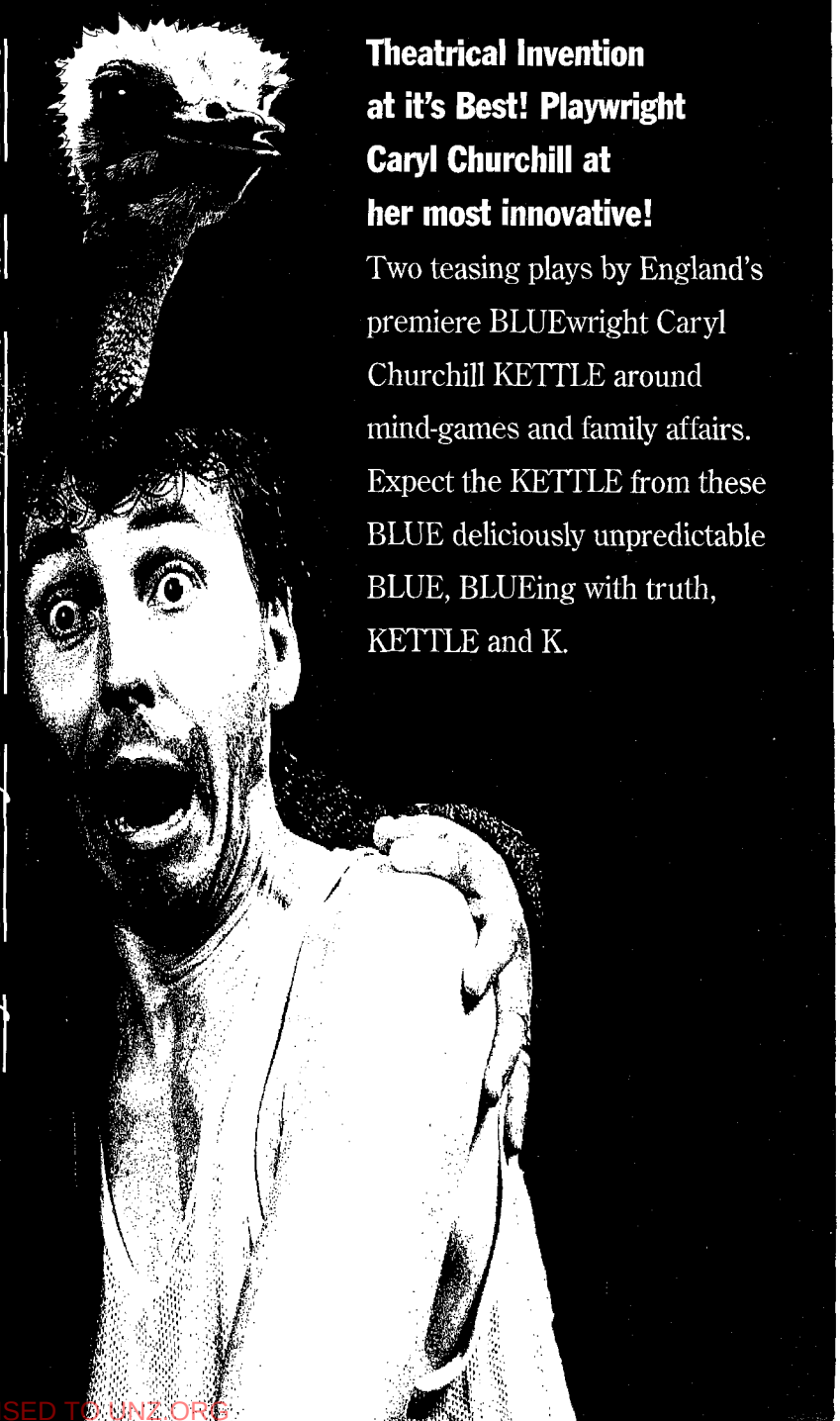
JONATHAN CHAIT

JONATHAN CHAIT is a fellow at the New America Foundation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BLUE HEART

By Caryl Churchill at The Studio Theatre



Theatrical Invention at it's Best! Playwright Caryl Churchill at her most innovative!

Two teasing plays by England's premiere BLUEwright Caryl Churchill KETTLE around mind-games and family affairs. Expect the KETTLE from these BLUE deliciously unpredictable BLUE, BLUEing with truth, KETTLE and K.

Like a computer smitten with a virus, these plays appear programmed to come irrevocably unglued as the evening progresses. Caryl Churchill, creator of *Top Girls* and *Cloud Nine*, enjoys playing games with theatrical form and language.

Opening November 3

The Studio Theatre
14th and P Streets, NW
Washington, DC
202-332-3300

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Take History to Heart

EXPLORE LIFE, LOSS, AND SURVIVAL DURING THE HOLOCAUST

10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily. ADMISSION FREE. Same-day passes for the main exhibition, *The Holocaust*, can be easily obtained at the Museum or in advance by calling ProTix (800) 400-9373. No passes necessary for Museum entrance, special exhibitions, and other resources. Special exhibitions include *Remember the Children, Daniel's Story* and opening December 8, 1999, *Life Reborn: Jewish Displaced Persons, 1945–1951*.

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW Washington, D.C. 20024 (202) 488-0400 www.ushmm.org metro: Smithsonian

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED